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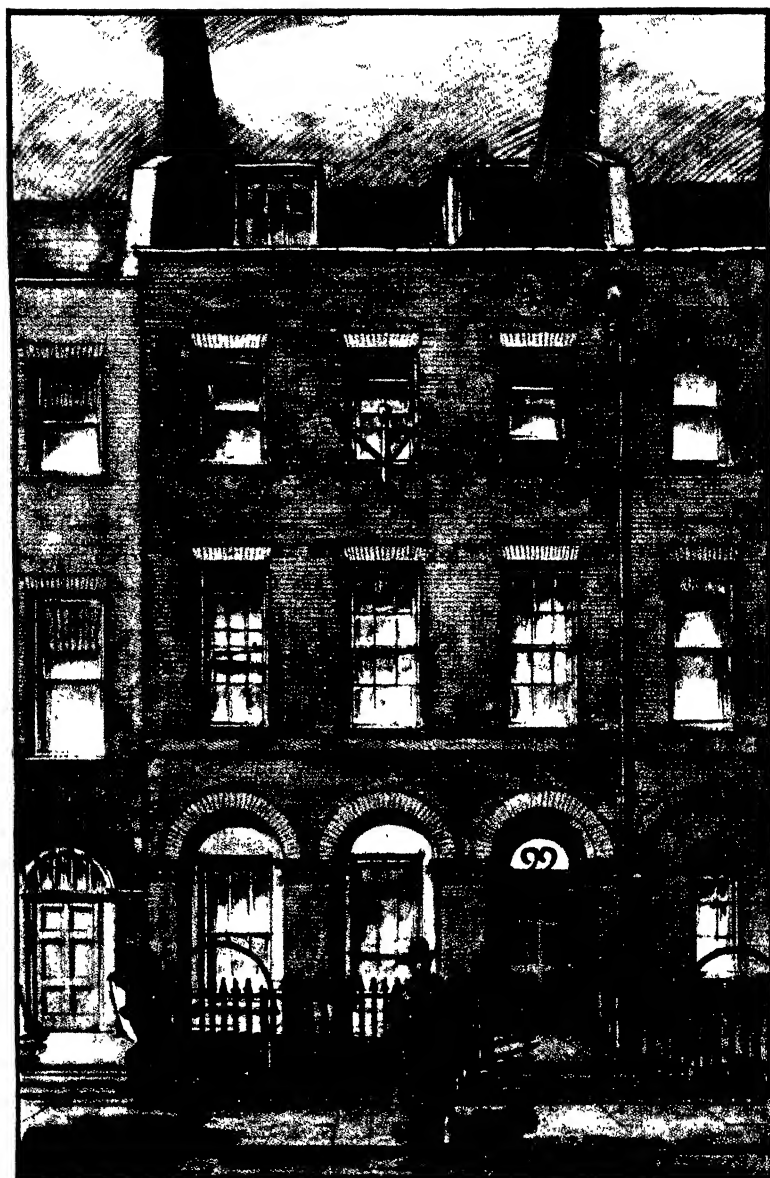
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NINETY-NINE
GOWER STREET

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TO
EVELYN WRENCH

INTRODUCTORY

To disinter one's own articles from the files, as I have done from ten annual volumes of the *Spectator*, is a chastening experience. How few of them were born for immortality. They served the purpose of the fleeting hour, hanging on some event that has long since lost whatever importance it ever had, and where they are—embedded in a few bound volumes in scattered libraries—they may well be left. That is the proper lot for the great majority. Whether there is some small residue equal to facing again the searching light of day is a question not easily resolved. A writer's judgement on his own work of yesterday is fatally fallible. But on articles he resurrects after five years or seven or ten, not always sure whether he can recognise them as his own or not, his verdicts can be more objective. Some he must condemn remorselessly as occupying space that might manifestly have been put to better use. Some, not devoid entirely of literary merit, embody political judgements which subsequent events have made derisory; nothing for them but to be pressed still deeper into oblivion's lap. Some, tied firmly to some past event, and completely irrelevant apart from it, could have no interest for a generation whose eyes are on the future and can only with an effort be focussed on the past.

What of the remnant? They make a varied and relatively scanty haul. The best perhaps that can be said of them is that they are not utterly ephemeral, though some of them undeniably and inevitably "date." And if they bear on events that are past or men that have died, the events connect with some principle and the men are worthy of memorial. That is true particularly of the kings, about whom, I find rather to my own surprise, I have written enough in the past eight years to form a first section of this book. They deserve attention, for kings are getting rare. Out of the seven Great Powers of the world Great Britain alone retains monarchy as an effective institution. In Italy it is obliterated by contempt; the other five have no place for it at all. Even in Britain we are realists about monarchy. No compulsion of tradition nor considerations of constitutional convenience would preserve it if once a king misused his limited powers. It is worth while examining what gives monarchy its strength today. Our present Sovereign does not derive his influence from his office so much as he sustains his office by his character, and all the respect the office traditionally commands would never save a king devoid of character. But the advantages attaching to a Head of the State aloof from all party politics, dissociated from all party controversies and

representing continuity and permanence while Ministers and Ministries come and go—to say nothing of the part he plays as symbol of national and imperial cohesion—are indisputable, and there has never been a time when their importance was more widely recognised than it is today. Here five sovereigns, past and future, are discussed. An article written on the centenary of Edward VII's birth provides some basis for an at any rate superficial comparison between that monarch and his son and grandsons, who are considered in connexion with the death of one, the abdication of another and the accession of a third, while future possibilities are canvassed in a brief study of Princess Elizabeth's preparation for the great responsibilities that await her.

That for a beginning. Then come some people. A few are characterised on their death, more on the basis of published biographies. The studies provide no revelations; the assessments are open to challenge; natural sympathy inevitably influences judgements framed on the morrow of a death; sometimes (as in the case of Mr. Baldwin and armaments) the temptation to rewrite or add is strong; but I hope they contain, as almost any biography must, some human interest. Round various other subjects small clusters form. One of them, Federal Union, inspired a mild dialectic, Professor Lionel Robbins intervening to break a far from negligible lance with me. This is the only specifically political section that I felt clear about including. Yet most of the five or six hundred articles I have written in the last ten years have been political, and a place should perhaps be found for some of them when they fall into a sequence. The choice seems to lie between a series following to its climax the crisis at Geneva arising out of the Italian attack on Abyssinia and a series dealing with the events which culminated in Mr. Chamberlain's three journeys to Germany and the disastrous agreement reached at Munich. Each has its place in the unfolding of the tragic drama of which the closing act is being played today, but the Munich failure is nearer chronologically and more direct in its effects than the Geneva failure. I have therefore, with little enthusiasm or satisfaction, included a section on it. The judgements there recorded wear a changed aspect when read in the sombre light of 1943. Some of them, instructed now by events as I could not be before the events occurred, I might not today endorse myself.¹ But at least what was written week by

¹ In one case, the strictures passed on the Treaty of Versailles on page 90, I survey with some perplexity what I wrote five years ago. I could not frame those strictures today, and I am surprised that I should have framed them then. Disarmament is another matter. It can well be argued that if the Disarmament Conference which opened in February 1932, while Brüning was still Chancellor of Germany, had resulted in rapid and effective agreement the whole course of future history would have been different.

week in 1938 does mirror the fluctuating hopes and fears by which the peoples of this land and many others were swept as the menace of war pressed down on them, lifted for a time—at Czechoslovakia's cost—and finally turned from menace to shattering reality on that September day when Hitler fell on Poland and the first shot in the greatest war in history was fired.

Finally a section on more enduring things. It can be argued that there is no place in a secular journal for what are summarily termed religious articles—not that all those here collected can be described as that. The answer is that the journal in question admits no such limitation. To the best of its ability it deals with the whole of life, and things spiritual have for it as much reality as any that can be claimed for things commonly called temporal. They may not figure so largely in its pages. Foundations rarely catch the eye in the same way as the structure resting on them; their existence is assumed as postulate, and there is no great reason to discuss it. But it is well sometimes, or so it seems to me, in the midst of the cares and controversies of our mundane citizenship, to remind ourselves that here we have no continuing city. Those who, recognising that, can yet not affirm that they seek one which is to come, need not assail, even if they cannot share, a faith by which others find themselves sustained. Of anything I have written on this aspect of life the most I would hope is that it may perhaps do some such service as the bell (so long silent, now once more vocal) which reminds town and countryside alike that there are times and places for worship in men's lives.

One last general word. It is the common fate of every journalist that what he writes necessarily in haste is read at leisure by persons at least as competent as he is to form judgements on the subjects he has dealt with. The articles of which this volume is comprised were written under those conditions. Wisely or unwisely, I have left them practically unaltered. A heading may have been changed here, a word replaced by a better word there, occasional references to dates now irrelevant removed. With these exceptions I have, with some temerity, let the principle *quod scripsi scripsi* prevail.

Crowns and Sovereigns

KING EDWARD VII

A HUNDRED years ago, on November 9th, 1841, Queen Victoria, to quote the official bulletin, "was safely delivered of a Prince at forty-eight minutes past ten o'clock." Archbishop Howley, who should have been present, hurried up too late. Sixty years later the infant ascended the throne as King of All the Britains (or all Britons; there is a strange difference of opinion as to what *Britt. Omn. Rex.* stands for), Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India, under the title of Edward VII. It had been a long apprenticeship, with a good deal to suffer in its early stages at the hands of many advisers. The Queen perpetually consulted Uncle Leopold, Prince Albert perpetually consulted Baron Stockmar, and their educational theories were converted assiduously into practice at the expense of the heir-apparent. With a German father and two German mentors it was a wonder that the King was as British as he was; it was left to his son, George V, to be the first essentially British sovereign since the Stuarts (or perhaps, for they after all were Scottish, since Elizabeth).

It was a bad up-bringing from start to finish. Educated by tutors of a devastating propriety, the Prince lived in a hot-house atmosphere, isolated rigorously from boys of his own age, except for a few meticulously selected companions. To that there was one valuable exception. He travelled—of course under strict tutelage. At fifteen he went to Paris, at sixteen to Königswinter on the Rhine, at eighteen to Rome, which, no doubt, explains how he became so excellent a linguist. For a year he attended the University of Oxford, or rather the University of Oxford attended him, for eminent professors visited him in his seclusion at Frewen Hall and lectured at him assiduously, with questionable effect. After a year of this he made a trip of real importance, to Canada and the United States. The prospect of it caused acute anxiety to Lord Lyons, our Ambassador at Washington, but the visit was a complete success. It was technically not the Prince who travelled to Washington (via Niagara Falls, where he shivered at the sight of M. Blondin crossing the Falls on a tight-rope) seven months before the Civil War broke out, but Baron Renfrew; so no royal honours were involved. Then a spell of Cambridge, or so much of Cambridge as could be savoured from the relatively remote fastness of Madingley Hall, including a

course of lectures on English history, stopping discreetly at the end of George IV's reign, by Professor Charles Kingsley in the professor's own house.

Now marriage loomed, and a list of seven eligible European princesses was compiled. Fifth on it came Alexandra of Denmark, and for reasons not quite clear it was with her first that a preliminary meeting was arranged. The impression made was mutually favourable, and feelings were left to ripen. Meanwhile, events had been happening, and continued to happen. The Great Exhibition had been held in Mr. Paxton's glass-house in Hyde Park. The Crimean War had produced the Charge of the Light Brigade and Miss Nightingale. In 1861 Prince Albert died, and in due time a memorial to him, fortunately unique, rose from the greensward to embellish Kensington Gore. 'This was a grave matter for the Prince. The Queen, inconsolable, went into a seclusion which caused her Ministers acute exercise of mind about the efficient functioning of the constitution. But so far from allowing her now adult son to deputise for her anywhere, she insisted on his complete exclusion from every function of State. He was left, unsatisfactorily, to other devices.

In 1863 the Prince was married, and the Poet Laureate, Mr. Tennyson, wrote an ode about the sea-kings' daughter from over the sea, omitting very properly to recall what the sea-kings in question had once done to his own and his Prince's country. He was now a family man, but he was not altogether made for domesticity, and in public affairs, except of a purely ceremonial kind, his royal mother forbade him to meddle. So he led a country gentleman's life at Sandringham and a man-about-town's life at Marlborough House. He travelled a good deal, he joined the Jockey Club and set up a racing-stud, and in various ways he showed signs of a reaction against the rigour of his early training. There were one or two unfortunate episodes. In 1870 he was mentioned invidiously in a society divorce case and went into the witness-box to deny the allegations, which were, in fact, quite unfounded. In the notorious Tranby Croft case, Sir William Gordon Cumming, a member, with the Prince, of a baccarat-party at a Yorkshire country-house, was charged with cheating, and the affair became public because he brought an action for libel. Again the Prince appeared in the witness-box. There was nothing against him, but the public did not like the company he kept, and after the divorce case he was actually hissed at Epsom—though race-course crowds are not commonly ultra-puritan.

At last, in 1901, the long apprenticeship ended. One winter evening the newsboys in the provincial town where I lived cried up and down the avenues "Death of Queen Victoria," and next morning a placard appeared in the window of the local paper announcing that the King had left Osborne for London. The intimation had a strangely unfamiliar ring. Not one Englishman in ten had known what it was to live under a king. The little old lady in black had been subconsciously accepted as immortal. Now the national anthem would be altered, Q.C.'s would become K.C.'s, all sorts of cataclysmic changes would follow. However, there it was. The Prince was King. He reigned a little over nine years, and then died at a May midnight in 1910 at Buckingham Palace. After thirty years the reign has passed into history, and history can record its objective verdict. On the whole the verdict is favourable.

That, I know, is not the universal view. One authority who watched public affairs closely during the reign affirmed recently that he regarded Edward VII as markedly inferior—I assumed he was going to say to George V; what he did say was to George IV. That judgement is over-harsh. It is built too much on the popular impression of the King in grey top-hat, cigar in mouth and field-glasses across shoulders, at Epsom or Newmarket or Doncaster or Ascot; or the King playing cards (not a vice peculiar to kings) in country-houses; or the King surrounded by a circle of rather exotic friends, who no doubt made it possible for Mr. Balfour to assure Parliament on his accession that he ascended the throne free of debt. But a king who ran his horses at the principal meetings and took his place in the select list of Derby winners (in 1909, with Minoru; he had done it as Prince, with Persimmon) pleased the public a good deal. He was 'Teddy' to them in affection, not disrespect.

And in all the routine duties of sovereignty King Edward could be dignified as well as genial. He was a stickler for Court etiquette, but in constitutional matters showed himself all that a constitutional king should be. Though he was associated conspicuously with various philanthropic movements at home—notably King Edward's Hospital Fund—his chief interest was in foreign affairs, and his prevailing sentiment in that field a wholesome distaste for his flamboyant nephew, Kaiser Wilhelm II. That certainly cannot be held to his discredit, unless he allowed his feelings to warp his judgement, and there is no evidence that he did. In Berlin he was credited with an initiative in foreign affairs which in fact he never exerted, par-

ticularly in the direction of the encirclement of Germany. The best testimony on that point comes from Lord Grey, who in his *Twenty-five Years* states that while the King read all the important papers and occasionally made marginal observations, he never made comments or suggestions. Mr. Balfour said the same thing in closely similar language regarding the period when he was Prime Minister. (That depends a little on the definition of comment; study of Gooch and Temperley's Foreign Office papers shows that the King did occasionally add a pungent minute on Germany's naval expansion, such as: "The proposed negotiations must obviously 'lie dormant,' but there is no sign of the German Naval Programme lying dormant—as the German Government seems very active in increasing the numbers of its Fleet.") King Edward's visit to Paris in 1903 was a triumph. The Boer War, that had ended less than a year earlier, had given all Europe, France by no means excepted, an opportunity to manifest its dislike of us, and the King's reception on his arrival in the French capital verged on hostility. As a result of the exercise of his innate tact and geniality he left Paris four days later in a blaze of popularity. In a different way his meeting with the Czar at Reval in 1908 had a distinct political value in reinforcing Sir Edward Grey's efforts to promote a good understanding between Britain and Russia.

But the King did not like Asiatics. There was a great to-do with Lord Lansdowne about whether the Shah should be given the Garter when he came to England in 1902. The King firmly refused, on the ground that he objected to conferring such honours on non-Christian sovereigns. As a result, the Shah went home without his Garter, but it was ultimately sent after him by a special mission. The Mikado and the King of Siam (Persia, Japan, Thailand—how relevant it all seems) were less fortunate. In their cases Edward said No and stuck to it—though the Mikado did get his Garter later. But he was worsted by John Morley over the appointment of Mr. Sinha, later Lord Sinha, to a seat on the Viceroy's Council. The idea of what he was pleased to call a Native in such a position horrified him, but as a constitutional monarch he gave way, under protest, to the combined pressure of Secretary of State and Viceroy. We have moved a good way since then.

The sorrow that his death in May, 1910, occasioned was universal and genuine, but the nation was not moved as the death of his mother in 1901 or of his son in 1936 moved it. His short reign—too short to give its name to an era—could hardly be compared with Victoria's long one. In a comparison with George V, the advantage

at every point was with King George. Edward, none the less, was above the average of English kings, and very far above the average of Hanoverians.

KING GEORGE V

THE death of no sovereign of these realms throughout their history has created more profound or widespread grief than King George V's. That is a large claim, but it is justified. His father enjoyed great popularity, but it was of a different texture from the affection King George inspired. Queen Victoria, after years of eclipse, had re-established a lasting hold on the hearts of her people, but in her lonely widowhood she could not appeal to a nation and an empire as King George did through five-and-twenty years, in virtue not only of his own personality but of the family circle of which he was the head. Owing immensely much to his mother, Queen Alexandra, the King set his duty to his home at least as high as his duty to his kingdom. And he was right. No greater service could have been rendered to the nation than the spectacle, of which the world from time to time caught revealing glimpses, of King George's sons and daughter growing up under the guidance of their father, and of as wise and devoted a consort as ever lightened the tasks of a British king, and taking up one by one those public duties which all of them have performed so unpretentiously and so well. On one, King Edward VIII, falls now the hardest duty of all. In the success with which he may be counted on to discharge it the first ingredient will be his father's training and example.

In King George dignity and simplicity were uniquely mingled. He owed much to the fortune of his birth, which made him a king's second son, not the heir-apparent to the throne, and enabled him to be brought up as a serving sailor. He mastered his profession. He commanded his own ships. He so far combined sagacity and knowledge as to convince that obdurate doctrinaire Sir John Fisher on at least one occasion that the First Sea Lord was wrong and the royal sailor, at that time Prince of Wales, was right. Till he came to the throne he was a subject and a citizen. When he succeeded his father he remained one with his fellow-citizens still. He had an intense sense of duty. His life might have been longer if he had spared himself more. He took each task as it came, and quietly and efficiently discharged it. Eight years before he became king himself,

when his father was struck down with sudden illness on the eve of his coronation, his sister, Princess Victoria (whose death so little preceded his) said of him that "the Prince of Wales was beyond all praise — good, helpful and quiet; he managed everything."

Those qualities remained characteristic throughout his life. The King was humble, but with no false humility. He could act with decision and independence, as he did in regard to the Parliament Bill procedure in 1910. He was conscious of the greatness of his office, and the inability of any mortal man to fill it to perfection; he was probably never fully conscious of the narrowness of the margin by which he failed of that high achievement. How continually, in places where speech was free and no servile reverence for royalty laid restraints on candour, has tribute been paid to King George's wisdom and tact and instinctive rightness. How rarely, if ever, has the opinion been uttered, either in bitterness or regret, that the King was wrong. Year by year in increasing measure he evoked the affection of an Empire. His critical illness in 1928 revealed for the first time what the King meant to the nation. From that time there was a new intimacy in the relationship between sovereign and people. The invention of wireless did much to foster it, by enabling his subjects to the limits of his realms to hear his voice and to realise behind the voice the monarch who was essentially a man of like substance to themselves. And the unprecedented depth and intensity of the enthusiasm that found expression in the Silver Jubilee celebrations was a revelation, and a matter for profound emotion, to the King himself. For this generation he will remain an unfading memory.

The span of King George's reign has seen the world in many respects revolutionised. The radio, the motor-car, the cinematograph have become the commonplaces of civilisation since he ascended the throne. And all but four years of his rule were darkened by war and the stresses and anxieties that were its legacy. All that in different ways affected King George and his family. But it is more relevant today to dwell on a change of immense significance to his subjects everywhere, in which his personal part was large. During his reign the Colonies became Dominions and the Empire a Commonwealth. That statement may not be strictly accurate chronologically. The process had begun before King Edward died. But it was during King George's reign that the Commonwealth in its present form, and with its present self-consciousness, took shape.

And the British Commonwealth of Nations is what it is, with its freedom unrestricted and its loyalty unqualified, because at the heart of the Empire there has ruled for a quarter of a century a King of all the Britains familiar with his Dominions from personal knowledge, of whose discerning sympathy they were constantly made aware. It is significant that while King Edward VII travelled chiefly in Germany and Austria and France, King George V travelled chiefly over the British Empire. He began his journeys as a midshipman of fourteen. He visited Cape Colony immediately after Majuba in 1879, and again twenty-two years later as the Boer War was ending. He inaugurated the new Parliament of the Australian Commonwealth, and held a Coronation Durbar in India on the occasion of his third visit to the great dependency whose last advance towards Dominion status he was to see foreshadowed, if not yet quite realised. "I have looked on Your Royal Highness," wrote Lord Esher as long ago as 1908, "as the first member of the Royal Family who has ever grasped the meaning, from personal experience, of Britain overseas." The knowledge and understanding which justified that tribute then had been vastly deepened and extended by the time the King was called to take leave of his dominion and his Dominions.

A great King has died, a King who has done more for his realm than most of his subjects yet fully comprehend. For kingship itself he has done almost infinitely much. Among the monarchs of the earth he stood solitary in his supremacy. The War sent his German cousin to exile at Doorn and his Russian cousin to death at Ekaterinberg. It swept the ruling Hapsburg from his dual throne. Its remoter consequences submerged the Italian monarchy. King George it left enduringly established in his rule over a people knit throughout the world as never before into a common unity by a common loyalty. There is no antiquarian or superstitious veneration for kingship as such in this realm or this Commonwealth. It has to prove itself in the person of a King. And it has been King George V's supreme achievement that in a day when monarchy is in eclipse in far more than half the world he has set kingship in this country not only beyond the breath of challenge but beyond the breath of criticism. His son ascends the vacant throne sustained by the confidence and loyalty of an undivided nation. To call on him to equal his father's virtues is to set the demand almost too high. If he can approach them he will have more than earned his people's gratitude.

ROYAL EXEMPLARS

THE nation has taken leave of King George. With majestic and moving ceremony his body has made its last journey through the city that is the heart and centre of his Empire and been laid in the Garter Chapel at Windsor beside his kinsmen who made their pilgrimage there before him. The octave of grief, that for the world began in all its poignancy when the words of tempered sorrow, "the King's life is moving peacefully towards its close," first fell on its ears, is ended. A new King reigns. Life must continue. The world is about its work again. King George is already in a sense a memory, though these days of mourning have made his personality so vivid that to millions of his subjects who never saw him he seems more near and real in death than he did in life. The memory left is imperishable. But a memory of what? Of a king discharging the duties of his office faultlessly. Of an ordinary man—a very ordinary man, as he termed himself—dignifying and adorning his high estate by the conscientious and self-sacrificing application of no other qualities than any of us, his subjects, were capable of exercising in the daily round of our normal lives. And are capable still, the more so for the example the king that has gone from us has given us. Death that sets the term to a single life calls a momentary pause in all other lives. We stop and notice what we let slip before. New traits in the dead are observed and marked. The King in life was far removed from our common lot. The King in death is revealed as an example to the humblest of the citizens of his realms.

That is a simple and obvious truth, but we may be grateful none the less to the Archbishop of Canterbury, to whom the whole English-speaking world is under a deep debt for the direction he has given to our thoughts in these days of mourning, for emphasising it so firmly and so clearly as he did in his two impressive addresses, at Westminster Abbey and from Broadcasting House. The Archbishop appealed particularly, as befitted his own office and the occasions on which he spoke, for a new remembrance of God, because of the example of a King to whom religion was a deep reality and the observances of it a daily practice. The striking regularity of the King's attendance at public worship could be ascribed to the influence neither of tradition nor of convention. He went far beyond what might have been asked or expected of him on those grounds. That those weekly hours spent with his family and a congregation of his subjects in a spiritual quest brought

him conscious strength and courage for the ceaseless business of a sovereign's life is proved by his quiet resolve that nothing should interfere with them. This is an age in which the claims of public worship are largely disregarded, for reasons many and familiar, whether adequate or not. King George's example, impressed on the nation by the Archbishop's words, may properly cause many who have sincerely mourned the King to ask themselves whether they may not be missing something that he found and deeply valued, because they have ceased to take the trouble to seek it.

That is a matter on which each man must search his own heart and none can prescribe rules or give verdicts for another. There are other qualities displayed by King George in his life, and by Queen Mary and King Edward since his death, well calculated both to move and to inspire all to whom they have been brought home by spoken or printed word in these days of national bereavement. A people modelling itself on King George's diligence and kindliness and self-sacrifice, on Queen Mary's devotion to family as well as public duties, and her wonderful fortitude in the hour of widowhood, on King Edward's quiet and unfaltering assumption of the heaviest burden that falls on any shoulders in this land, would be a people in a large measure transformed. Fortunate are we in a royal house that offers such examples to its subjects.

It has not been always so in Britain. It is not everywhere so today. Nor is it to be claimed that the King or the Queen Mother or the royal princes are of anything but ordinary clay. They are no more immune from the weaknesses and failings of humanity than any one of the human men and women who watch them moving in that fierce light that beats upon a throne and exaggerates every littleness and every fault. No higher tribute indeed need be offered them than the recognition that the work they have to do they have done and are doing supremely well. That perhaps was most conspicuously true of King George; or perhaps it only seems so because it is on his completed achievement that our minds at this moment are primarily fixed. It would be the best of all memorials to the King, and one which the lowliest of his subjects can raise as easily as the highest, if as individual citizens we resolved in this hour of farewell that we would for the nation's sake school ourselves to the exercise, in our several spheres, of those virtues which he for a quarter of a century exercised for the nation's sake in his.

And now we have on the throne a new exemplar. King Edward VIII has already made himself, as Prince of Wales, as well known to the people of this country as his father. They do

not know all of him. Part of him has still to be revealed even to himself, for only the new responsibilities now resting on him can bring certain qualities to their full fruition. Already, in the eight days of his reign that have passed as these lines are being written, there seems visible in his character a new dignity and a new depth, blending most happily with that unaffected simplicity that has commended him since his childhood to every circle—and they are many—in which he moved. On no one, not even Queen Mary, has the stress of these last days been heavier. The spectacle of the young King walking twice for long miles through London behind his father's coffin has given him at once a place beside that father in his people's hearts. As the millions of listeners to the service broadcast from Windsor on Tuesday heard the last strains of the Dead March die away, the first emotion for many, perhaps for most, of them was thankfulness that at last that silent figure beside the coffin could find relief from a strain of mind and body almost beyond physical endurance.

The Prince as King will be a different man from the Prince as Prince. But as Prince he has long displayed qualities which we may study with profit to ourselves. How many of the new King's subjects have done as much for ex-soldiers as he has through 'Toc H and the British Legion, or as much for the youth of the country as he has through the Jubilee Trust? How many have manifested as personal an interest in the unemployed as he has through his visits to Tyneside and other suffering areas? Yet in all these fields it is open to everyone, not indeed to do what the King has done, but at least to do something. Two of the keynotes to King Edward's character are reality and simplicity. None of us but would be better for more of them ourselves. Happy is the country whose sovereigns are not merely rulers but exemplars to their people, and unworthy the citizen to whose life such examples make no difference.

THE PRICE OF KINGSHIP

No question, as every experienced journalist knows, is more difficult to decide than the point at which a loyal reticence becomes a conspiracy of silence. The question has for months past been under anxious consideration in every newspaper office in this country in a particular connexion. During that period the newspapers of the

United States and of some of the Dominions have been printing millions of words on a subject on which the British Press has maintained an unbroken silence. Now silence is possible no longer. A sentence in the address of the Bishop of Bradford to his Diocesan Conference¹ is unmistakable in its implications. Speaking, in reference to the Coronation ceremony, of the King's need for God's grace, Dr. Blunt, having manifestly weighed his words, expressed the hope that King Edward was aware of the need, and added "some of us wish that he gave more positive signs of his awareness."

To those who have lived through the reign of King George V that is surprising and disturbing language, and if the Bishop of Bradford had not specific grounds for his criticism of King George's son, condemnation of his temerity would be universal. As things are the Bishop will be generally held to have rendered a public service. That it did not become him in particular to render it may no doubt be argued. There are higher dignitaries in the Church and State to which the task more properly belongs. But no one who has read the leading articles, admirable alike in their firmness and their discretion, which the Bishop's address has inspired in some of the great provincial papers—most notably the *Yorkshire Post*—can long retain any doubts of the advantage of elevating discussion of the King's affairs, if discussion there must be, from the chatter of railway carriages and drawing-rooms and clubs to the responsible columns of serious organs of opinion.

For whatever comment is so expressed will be reluctant, respectful and profoundly sympathetic. The King of Great Britain and the Dominions is the servant of his people. His life is not his own but theirs. It is perpetually, almost pitilessly, spread before their gaze. In his self-sacrificing devotion to public duty King Edward upholds the highest traditions of his father, and with no such support and stay as his father drew from an ideal marriage. Set on his lonely eminence, the King has a double claim on the affection and loyalty of his people. That claim, it is fair to add, has been honoured to the full. Never did a ruler of these realms ascend the throne more richly dowered. He succeeded to the privileges and obligations of a father who had been the very mould and pattern of a constitutional king, and a king whose unexampled hold on the loyalty and devotion of his subjects sprang before all things from their admiration of a family life which the highest and the lowest of his people could with advantage take as model.

It is to that tradition that King Edward is called on to be scrupu-

¹ On December 1st, 1936.

lously true. The life of an unmarried king must necessarily in a measure be a life of solitude. None would dream of grudging him the fullest measure of such friendships as lesser men and women find part of the indispensable substance of a rounded life. None would willingly intrude for a moment into such privacy as the exigencies of his high station leave him. But the King, after all, has obligations that his subjects have not. In transferring to him unabated the confidence and affection bestowed on his father the people of these realms counted, and had a right to count, on that fulfilment of a spiritual and unwritten contract in which King George never faltered nor was capable of faltering. *Noblesse oblige*. Even in kingship there must be sacrifice. Both as prince and monarch King Edward has shown himself conscious to the full of that—never more than in the last few weeks, when his visit to his storm-tossed fleet and his tireless investigation of conditions in South Wales have identified him as never before with every section of his people.

But something still further is asked of the King. No more is charged against him than a friendship carried to the point of un-wisdom with a lady who, till the decree granted in her favour six weeks ago is made absolute, is still a married woman. Nothing need be said of that in itself. If it could be regarded as the King's concern alone every paper that has preserved silence so far would preserve it thankfully still. But what would be a private matter for a private citizen may have grave reactions when it involves a king. The person and personality of the sovereign is a factor of inestimable importance in the British Commonwealth of Nations. He is the supreme link between the Dominions and this country. In India above all, knowledge of the ground for any breath of criticism of the King-Emperor would have disastrous consequences. Demands almost terrible in their rigour are made on the sovereign of these Dominions. They are not made lightly. There is no stint of generous sympathy with a King called on to observe standards set remorselessly high, which any of his subjects can transgress with relative impunity. But he is not asked for an unrequited sacrifice. If he so sets his course, and orders his associations, as to retain the homage and loyalty which the people of Britain and her Dominions bestowed in their amplitude on his father, he has a reward such as no other living man, and few in any age, could enjoy.

There may be something on which he sets an even higher value than that. If so, his decision would be received on public grounds with deep regret. On private grounds it could command nothing but sympathy and respect. Times change. The creation of new

precedents causes no consternation. Restraints on a sovereign's choice of consort become increasingly distasteful. But that the question can be regarded as one for himself alone, in which his Ministers and his people have no part, is more than can be conceded. That is the price of kingship. The personality of the Queen of England and the mother of the King's children is a matter of supreme public concern.

THE COUNTRY AND THE THRONE

THE constitutional crisis moves to its climax. King Edward's abdication is foreshadowed but not yet announced. The outlook at best is profoundly melancholy, for however this unhappy affair may end it cannot end well. King Edward can only retain his throne with impaired prestige or bequeath to his brother a sovereignty brought for the first time in a hundred years under serious criticism. The harm was done when the King first allowed himself to set his affections on a married woman, and refused to recognise the inevitable outcome of failure to end an impossible relationship while it could be ended with a tithe of the pain that renunciation must cost today. No one has the right, and very few the inclination, to adopt the attitude of censor in this matter. The country has shown itself patient and generous and astonishingly united—and there was never greater need for the preservation of that unity. Kingship, as an institution, means much in this land. It has justified itself abundantly, and left small temptation to anyone to call himself republican. Deep as was the reverence and affection that King George inspired, the loyalty he commanded was transferred unimpaired to his eldest son, and it will not weaken under the strain of another transfer, if another there must be, even in conditions so abnormal.

But it is not so much our loyalty that is under test as our self-discipline. The King's Government must be carried on, whatever King is on the throne. These are days of anxiety and peril, and the most deplorable feature of the situation so suddenly created is that such a moment should have been chosen to lay an unprecedented burden on Ministers who were bearing responsibilities that almost overtaxed their capacity already. Thanks largely to the wisdom and self-sacrifice of the Prime Minister, who possesses ideal qualities for

coping with such an emergency as this, they have proved equal to every demand made on them. There has been no hint of Cabinet divisions. There has been no suggestion in the House of an attempt in any quarter to make party capital—personal capital may be another matter—out of a situation which every Member unfeignedly deplores but every Member is resolved to keep in its proper perspective and proportion in relation to the problems of the world and of the nation. As little has there been hint or sign of division or doubt among the Dominions. In the literal sense of the classic phrase, their unanimity is wonderful. Insidious suggestions have been made that the Government may not have put the issue to the Dominions fairly. Dominion statesmen and the Dominion public are not illiterate. They can read their newspapers. They do not depend on coded cables from Whitehall for material for their decision in such a case as this. The issue is clear, and their judgement has been unhesitating and sure.

That judgement takes neither in the case of the people of this country nor of the peoples of the great Dominions the form of self-righteous condemnation. It was said while the issue was still uncertain that any comments on the course the King has taken would be reluctant, respectful and profoundly sympathetic. That has been proved amply true. The King was wrong. He allowed an impossible situation to grow up and he proposed an impossible way of escape from his difficulties. To believe that a lady whom he recognised as unfitted to be Queen of England could be accepted as fit wife for the King of England betrayed a strange and disturbing misunderstanding of the mind of Cabinet, Parliament and people. Whatever way of escape there may be, that road at least is barred. Of the only two roads left, renunciation of Mrs. Simpson and renunciation of his throne, King Edward, it seems, has chosen the latter. It is his right, and it may well, in all the circumstances, be the path of wisdom. It is an untrodden path for an English King, but he will take it sustained in the future as in the past by the sympathy and affection of his people. They would gladly forget the cause of his departure; they will never forget the life of service he has spent among them and the devotion with which he has discharged unfalteringly every duty attaching to his office as Prince or King. If today the involuntary comment must be "the pity of it," the King will know that, wherever the lines may fall for him, he need never forfeit his hold on the hearts of his countrymen.

If tomorrow the country is called on to pledge its allegiance to a new King, taking up his vast responsibilities in circumstances that

give the burden a doubled weight, it will pledge it without reserve or stint. Even where there was division about King Edward, there will be none about the duty to sustain his successor to the utmost. Nor will there be any question of forced confidence. The Duke of York has, through a lifetime only eighteen months less, been as familiar a figure in this country, though not in the Dominions, as his elder brother. Each lacks some qualities the other possesses and possesses some that the other lacks. In the younger there are more concealed reserves. In many ways he is more his father's son than any of his brothers. King George was mourned and honoured at his death for capacities unsuspected when he ascended the throne twenty-five years earlier; so it may well be with his second son. That son, too, like his father, can depend at all times on the support and sympathy and counsel of a wife as capable of sharing his public as his private life. The transition is painful. All partings bring sorrow, and this far more than most. But good may well come out of evil, even out of evil not apparent but real. Democracy has in these last days borne itself well, with dignity, with patience, with resolve. All those qualities, and more, will be needed still. Behind a new King must be an undivided people, and the world must be shown that plainly. We must be about our business. The formalities of transfer will go through smoothly. The appointed date of the Coronation, it may be hoped, will remain. The ship of State will vary neither its speed nor its direction. If the King departs, long live the King.

AFTER ABDICATION

THE climax of the drama of the Throne has been reached and passed. The swiftness and smoothness of the transition from King Edward to King George is not easily appreciated to the full. On Friday morning¹ King Edward was sovereign; by Monday the nation had settled down with calm and confidence to the beginning of what all pray will be the long and prosperous reign of a new King George, whose guiding principle, as he has already shown by several significant decisions, will be the traditions his father set. Acceptance of King George VI is universal, unhesitating and unqualified; papers and persons who aimed at another solution of the crisis are at one on that with those who had concluded with reluctant conviction that this

¹ December 11th, 1936.

was the only way to keep the unity of the nation unbroken. The crisis has taught us many things, and taught the world at the same time what a democracy, when it is truest to itself, can be.

Rarely, indeed, in any country at any time has a democracy vindicated itself as the democracy of this country has done in the present month. It has exhibited a restraint, a unity, a soundness of judgement and a firmness of resolve that spring spontaneously from the instincts born of the traditions of centuries. It has known its own mind and had confidence in its own decisions. Newspapers with vast circulations have attempted in vain to divert it from the broad road down which its own inherent sense of what was right and necessary led it. The House of Commons, with individual exceptions which threw into impressive relief the prevailing solidarity, has displayed a sureness of purpose, animating members of all parties alike, for which even the opening days of the Great War afforded no precedent. In every country—Germany and France, the United States and Italy and a score of lesser States—admiration for the temper and achievement of the people of Britain has been universal. “England,” said the *Berliner Tageblatt*—and the testimony is made doubly significant by its origin—“has provided the most magnificent spectacle available of a nation held together by common ideas of propriety and honour and responsibility to history. . . . The world has again been reminded of the strength that emanates from this island.”

Such a tribute, typical of hundreds the world over, gives no excuse for complacency. We have merited it in this crisis; it is another thing to remain worthy of it as the normal tasks of life are resumed. A democracy true to itself has something greater to give to the world than military force or economic strength provides, and the world has not been slow to recognise that. To quote this time from an American commentator, “The fact that Britain has come through the crisis with such dignity and with so little unsettling of its institutions is to the advantage of America and all free nations.” That is profoundly true. Democracy as a principle of government knows no frontiers. Tolerance is of the essence of it; it makes no attempt to impose itself except by its own example; but whenever a democratic country is put to a searching proof and survives the test it gives inspiration and hope to democracies everywhere. But on one condition. Tolerance and freedom of expression and the unrestricted right to criticism must be exercised against the background of a fundamental cohesion; even unity imposed from above may be better than the absence of any unity at all. A democracy worthy

of its professions will apply itself after its ordeal with new vigour to setting its own house in order and playing its rightful part in a world in which democracies have formidable foes to face.

THE CROWNING DAY

AT length ¹ is about to be unfolded in the Abbey Church of St. Peter at Westminster the ceremony for which through half a year the peoples of the British Commonwealth have been preparing. The scale of the preparations has been immense. Lavishness has swelled into extravagance. The thing, we have been told and have told ourselves, is overdone; a nation with stern work to do in a world beset with perils must limit the time it spends on pageantries and pomps. All that is true; yet less true, perhaps, than it appears. The elaboration of the provision made for spectators both in the Abbey and throughout the processional route is of no one's seeking but the would-be spectators' themselves. The inflated prices asked for seats are fixed by the readiness of buyers to pay them. Crowds beyond all precedent are resolved to have their share in the celebration of the crowning of King George VI.

It is their right, and they do well to exercise it. The critics may justly condemn emotional excess, but they have had their say, and criticism can now be silent that rejoicing may be unmarred. For the day that is at hand is great and notable. The coronation of a king is no empty show. It is a ceremony charged in every line and movement with deep and pregnant meaning for those who care to look beneath its surface. It is a symbolism in which the traditions not merely of a nation but of humanity gather themselves up and find expression. The King today is not a man apart from his people. He is his people personified. In crowning him the nation in a real sense crowns itself. The vows he takes are taken in its name. Alone, without the people with whose fate his own is interwoven, he could never fulfil them. When the Royal Princes, and then the Peers of different rank, kneel before him in the Abbey, declaring themselves his Liege men of Life and Limb and of earthly worship, it is to the whole community, of which the King is at once a humble member and the chosen head, that they dedicate their service, as he himself and his consort dedicate themselves and the children for whom they speak to their people and to God.

¹ On May 7th, 1937.

They could do it more simply. They could do it—as we may believe they have—in the privacy of their home. But there is value which no scoffer can depreciate in the strange and ancient ritual wherewith the crowning is invested, no less than in the great cortège that will wind its memorable way through the time-stained City that is at once a nation's and an Empire's centre, when the Archbishops and Bishops have done their part and a crowned King is returning to his palace. If there is anything they stand for, the ceremony within and the procession without, it is the unity of the great society of which every British citizen is member—a unity stretching back through centuries of history, a unity spanning continents and oceans, a unity in which generations yet unborn already by anticipation have their place. The feudal origins of our State are reflected in both the ancient words and the ancient symbolism of the Coronation service; the oath the sovereign takes epitomises, as the most learned of recent writers on the Coronation has impressively shown, the charters by which in past years the English people have secured their freedom; yet it includes words that today as never before associate the peoples of Great Britain, Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa on an equal footing, equal in status, bound to one another by the loyalties of kinship, bound in no wise by subjection to any dominant partner. Even in 1911, when King George's father was crowned, the oath spoke of "the people of this United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the Dominions thereto belonging." Those words are already alien to the recognised conception of the Commonwealth today.

If the dim vistas of the Abbey Church pulsate with history the pageant of the streets is a mirror of the realities of today. As the representatives of the Dominions and dependencies, a very Homeric catalogue of them, pass by in long-drawn line, some realisation of what the British Commonwealth is must dawn on the mind of the dullest or most heedless onlooker. The Dominions—Canada with her three million French, South Africa with her Dutch stock dominant and an Afrikaans Prime Minister to represent them, New Zealand with her Maoris—chose George VI to be their King by free vote of their elected Parliaments. India as freely accepted him as King-Emperor. The dark-skinned natives of African dependencies hailed him as they heard his accession proclaimed. Together they stand for a great experiment in government, an experiment still working itself out, with no ultimate end fixed for it, but no tendencies manifest that need disturb the minds of those who see in the Commonwealth the ideal example in the affairs of States of diversity

within a larger unity, of individual freedoms converging instinctively in a common purpose.

With all the history he embodies in his office, with all the immensity of Empire that in his person he represents, we shall not forget on Wednesday the human man on whom so vast a weight of responsibility will be symbolically laid as the Archbishop sets the crown upon his head and the People with loud and repeated shouts cry God save the King and the Trumpets sound and the great Guns at the Tower are shot off. It is no mummer monarch on whom the sword is girded and in whose hand the sceptre and the orb are set. He is a man who has lived his people's life, who has discharged diligently and with quiet purpose the tasks that came to him as Prince, who has made a home of which it is sufficient praise to liken it to that into which he himself forty years ago was born. And more than most kings he has laid the people of his nation and his commonwealth under debt, by his unfaltering acceptance in an hour of crisis of a burden which, no man can doubt, was as unwelcome as it was unlooked for. To the King and Queen and their children, with the Princes, his brothers, who share his duties and will be the first to do him homage, there is offered the universal and confident salutation of a nation that has learned to accord its sovereigns affection and respect without servility. And to one absent figure, who might have been the centre of the whole great scene, is offered equally universal sympathy in retrospect in the ordeal of the choice he had to make, and a nation's goodwill to speed him on whatever path may lie ahead.

If we think of the King as a human man, we think of him at this Coronation as a human man dedicating himself to God and conscious beyond any of his subjects of his need for more than human aid. The Coronation is a religious, not a legal, ceremony. It marks pre-eminently the dedication of the King, but in that dedication, if the Coronation is to be charged with its full significance, all the people is bound up.

“ We make no vows, but vows are then made for us
 . . . that we should be, else sinning greatly,
 Dedicated spirits.”

The poet's words, thus adapted, speak less than the truth. Vows will be made, not in the Abbey only and not perhaps in spoken words, by men and women who recognise that the call to them to fulfil their citizenship is no less compelling than the call to the King to fulfil his Kingship. People and King exchange their vows when the King is crowned, but the whole of the Abbey service is a reminder that

they exchange them, in reverence and solemnity, before God. Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

DEMOCRACY AND KINGSHIP

As King George escapes from the distractions of ceremonial and settles to his appointed labours he is favoured by the Leader of the Opposition, who may be the King's first adviser in a few years' time, with a clear indication of how the Opposition of today, the potential Government of tomorrow, would have him live his life. Monarchy, in Mr. Attlee's view, must be simplified. There is room, no doubt, for pomp and ceremony—it would be hard to contest that after the display of popular enthusiasm and rejoicing that the Coronation evoked—but pomp and ceremony are something other than servility and extravagance, and it is by servility and extravagance, according to Labour speakers, that the monarchy, and the attitude of the people towards it, are conspicuously marked today. Parade, adulation, snobbery, are the concomitants of kingship, and the King of a democratic people may rightly be called on to give evidence in his life of a reasonable measure of democratic simplicity.

Such is the Opposition thesis, and it would be a great mistake to dismiss it as mischievous or unseemly criticism of the Crown. It is obviously nothing of the kind. So far as we know him, King George, like his father, is a simple man, and whoever takes exception to a plea for more simplicity it will not be he. One of the more delicate problems that will confront him in the course of years, a problem that he must solve largely for himself, is how to bring the externals of kingship into conformity with the essential spirit of democracy. That will assuredly not be done by robbing kingship of its dignity. Democracy signifies self-government and self-expression and co-operation, not uniformity or classlessness. There is nothing in it antagonistic to monarchy as an institution. But it must be monarchy of a certain type. A king was once at the same time priest, lawgiver and leader in battle. In Great Britain today he is none of these things. Kingship, as we know it and deliberately maintain it, is something more than a convenience and something less than a necessity, and it is because our recent kings have so interpreted it that the throne stands unmenaced and secure.

But it would be a mistake again to think that the evolution of monarchy is at an end. On the contrary, the King must be perpetually adapting himself to the world in which he lives. Queen Victoria was the first British sovereign to have to bow to the will of a Parliament broadly representative of the people, and in her more imperious moments she took hardly to the experience. King George V was the first sovereign to have to deal with a Labour Party as an effective political force, and most admirably he handled the situation. King George VI, with the immeasurably valuable example of his father to guide him, will need to go further still in the removal of barriers between the Crown and the common people. We have just been witnessing the erection of stupendous barriers. With age-long tradition and ceremonial dominant—and rightly, for they linked reign to reign and life to life back through a dozen centuries—the King has been displayed as a man apart from the greatest of his subjects, set by his high office on a lonely and unenviable eminence. All this is well; it has its moment. But only its moment. The king of pageantry is now a workman king, and the more conscientiously he carries out his own particular job the less patient will he be of barriers between him and men who are carrying out theirs. Those barriers are, in fact, as Mr. Attlee says, too many and too high.

What are they? Not for a moment the palaces or the civil list, on the discussion of which the whole argument about simplicity arose. The King has fewer houses than many of his subjects, and even Mr. Maxton can hardly want seriously to turn Balmoral and Windsor and Buckingham Palace into hospitals. But if it is argued that a king who is ruler over all classes of his people—among whom those with incomes under £500 a year immensely predominate—is surrounded in the intimacy of his daily contacts by men and women of a single social class, and to a large extent of a particular political outlook, if it is contended that a Court is habitually a breeding-place for artificiality and snobbery, and that the hot-house atmosphere of conventional curtsseys compares ill with the spontaneous homage of cheering crowds, then Mr. Attlee, assuming him to accept paternity for such views, will find some millions of supporters outside the Labour Party. The Ladies and Gentlemen of the Household had their rightful place in the Coronation procession a fortnight ago, but the men and women of whom King George is king essentially were not riding behind postilions, but lining the streets ten-deep, where some of them had stood the clock round to see him pass. He knows their kind. He has tramped through their

factories. He has seen them on the lower deck of the ships he served on. He has lived with them under canvas. For them he must be no mere king on a gilt State coach.

That is King George's problem and let no man estimate it lightly. He has the dignity of the greatest tradition among living monarchs to uphold. It is part of the texture of the nation's life, and to sacrifice it would be an incalculable loss. To the Dominions, with all their democracy and their dislike of empty titles, it means hardly less than to the King's subjects in these islands. But the distaste of the Dominions for the fripperies of place and precedence—by no means peculiar to Royal Courts, as anyone who has ever set foot in Washington knows—is a factor not to be disregarded. The King has his appointed task under the Constitution. It is an immeasurable gain that the Head of the State should be a personage aloof from all suspicion of party bias. But he has his appointed task too as a human man holding a unique position among forty million men and women human like himself. He can render them service, and does, in many ways. But his supreme service is to reveal to them in himself a right sense of values. To do that he must see great things as great and small things as small.

That is what justifies the demand for simplicity. In themselves, and in their place, the niceties of ceremony and etiquette may do no harm, but they are essentially minor and trivial things. Exalt them into imperatives and they create at once false values demoralising and unwholesome. The spirit of man, of a king or a Cabinet Minister or a cabinet-maker or a tram-conductor, striving to express itself in the diligent discharge of daily duties, in the upbuilding of a family life and a larger social existence in which individual bears with individual and cares for individual, in the alternate discipline of sacrifice and effort—that is something beside which the little mean-nesses and folly of social strivings, in suburban villa as much as in Mayfair mansion, keep their low level and stand revealed for the pettiness they are. Talk of social equality is widely current today, but if half of it is sincere, the other half is largely cant. And so far as it is cant, it divides a nation that needs to be united. If he would cement his country's unity King George VI must be a man apart from his people yet of them, showing them not merely a life that is clean and honest, but a life in which the trivial and the transient bulk less and less and familiarity with a great nation's varying needs is made a chief concern. A man set that task has good title to our prayers.

THE KING AND HIS CAMP

KING GEORGE'S visit¹ to what is still (despite the change in the status of its founder) known as the Duke of York's Camp was something far other than a mere addition to the routine duties of a hard-worked sovereign. It was a renewal of contacts which the King has made unfailingly, since he founded the camp seventeen years ago, with a remarkable institution, peculiarly his own. Camps for school-boys are familiar enough, and very admirable most of them are, but this is a camp of a special character, fulfilling a special purpose. Its origin was a game of football played in Vincent Square in the early 'twenties between Westminster School and a team of boys from the coalfields of South Wales. The Duke of York, who was then only seven or eight years older than the players, but whose interest in the welfare of industrial workers was already keen, watched the match and conceived an idea, which, with his own generosity and personal activity to back it, has borne notable fruit. Conscious of the vital necessity, if the national unity is to be preserved—if, in other words, we are to be not two nations but one—of bridging the gulf which perhaps more than now threatened to open between classes, he has annually invited as his personal guests four hundred boys, two hundred from public schools and two hundred from the ranks of the wage-earners, to a seaside camp, held first at Romney Marsh in Kent and now at Southwold.

The purpose is the breaking down of barriers, and so far as the camp is concerned they are plainly broken down. Southwold in the first week of August is a place where boys from widely different environments, with different pasts and different futures and different ideas about life, share a common existence and learn to value each other for what they are, not for what they may have or hope to have. In itself the camp is no more than a symbol. Only four hundred boys each year enjoy the privilege of attendance, and though each of the four hundred is likely to become a focus of enthusiasm in his own particular circle, no one, least of all the King, would claim that the institution in itself is solving any national problem. But the symbolism is twofold, and one part of it is of high significance. If the camp is symbolic of a unity which needs to be realised on a national scale it is symbolic equally of the position of monarchy in this country as conceived by its present sovereign. A visiting speaker

¹ August 1st, 1938.

at the Southwold camp mentioned that he had once been asked by a member of an American audience how long Great Britain would remain under monarchical institutions, and said that the right answer was not the one he gave—"as long as Great Britain had the opportunity of watching the United States under republican institutions"—but, "as long as we had a King who made such enterprises as the Duke of York's camp his personal concern." That is fundamentally true. With all our traditions we are not wedded to monarchy at any cost. There have been avowed republicans holding high places in public life in this country in the last century. There are none today, but there well might be if King George V and King George VI had not been the men we have seen and known. And there will be again, if monarchy fails to justify itself.

King George VI is still in the earliest stage of what we may confidently trust will be a long and prosperous reign, but he cannot be content to interpret his high functions in the light of inherited tradition alone. Many of the traditions attaching to a Court are valuable, some are picturesque and harmless, some, which make for ostentation and affectation and snobbery, are definitely evil. The time has long gone past when this country recognised a ruling class and was satisfied that its sovereign should be in contact with that alone. It is not enough today that the King should concern himself with high politics. If he is to keep his hold on his people's hearts he must keep contact with his people's lives. That is not easy for a king; it is due to him, indeed, to recognise how hard it is. Ceremonial and official duties form a stern routine, and with a sovereign as conscientious as King George the danger is that more may be laid on him than a normal physique can bear. But the King has made it amply clear that it is not for shows and ceremonies that he cares, but for the lives the ordinary people of the country are living. Just ten days after his return from the mission he fulfilled so admirably amid unexampled splendour at Paris he was being rowed ashore in a pull-over and shorts by two East Coast fishermen to play the host to his four hundred guests at Southwold. It is by no means certain that on a long-term reckoning the former was the greater service.

For though it may not be essential, it is in the highest degree expedient that monarchy in this country should be preserved—it is hard to see how without it the unity of the Commonwealth could be maintained at all—as it can only be if the sovereign of the day has qualified himself to understand the temper of the ultimate arbiters of the country's destiny, the voters who make and unmake Govern-

ments. It is not enough that he should be made familiar with it at second-hand through his Ministers, still less through a Palace *entourage* in which fixed opinions and inelastic minds too frequently predominate. As Duke of York the King made the industrial life of the country his special study. He has visited, not in the form of any cursory perambulations, factories and industrial undertakings in every part of the kingdom, and discussed their problems with the men who have to handle them and settle them themselves. A Prince has more leisure for such study than a King, but the understanding of the problems is even more requisite for a King than for a Prince. The balance of power within the constitution has shifted markedly since King George's grandfather died. It was natural then—to take a single example—for the King to be familiar with the outlook of the royalty-owner; it must be natural for him today to understand the outlook of the hewer and the haulier—and equally of the factory worker and the agricultural labourer and the railway-man. A King who is visibly setting himself to do that, so far as limited opportunities permit, deserves the deep appreciation of his people.

Little is gained by overstressing comparisons between this and other lands. But no one whose fortune it was to see a slight figure, indistinguishable in garb from any of his four hundred boys, springing ashore from a rowing boat on Southwold beach, could fail to give mental thanks to Heaven as he contrasted the scene with the clicking heels and steel helmets and the goose-steps, native or imported, which are deemed the appropriate homage to other rulers. Yet that reflection may easily be too complacent. In a world in which uniforms grow more numerous daily we cannot pass our lives, metaphorically, in camp-kit. If what the King's camp stands for primarily is a unity unbroken by social barriers the idea behind it involves equally unity in self-discipline. It is doubtful whether that lesson has yet been fully learned. The very efficiency of our social services may result in the substitution of passive receptivity for active effort. Moral education in that field is both necessary and hard. But that is a separate issue; meanwhile the record of the King's camp suggests one obvious and immediate need. The camp must not remain unique. The coasts and hills and valleys of Britain should be studded with such settlements, following faithfully the original model, and bringing together not four hundred boys of different classes but forty thousand.

THE KING OF CANADA

TWENTY-SIX years ago¹ Prince Albert, King George the Fifth's second son, serving as cadet on H.M.S. *Cumberland*, landed for the first time on the shores of Canada. Now, as King of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, he sets sail again to revisit the oldest and nearest of those Dominions. No journey ever undertaken by a British King or Queen could be more timely. The loyalty of the Dominions and their association with Great Britain is not built on constitutional instruments like the Statute of Westminster—it might almost be said to subsist in spite of them—but that Statute itself is speaking in terms not of legalism but of flesh and blood when it affirms the Dominions to be “united by a common allegiance to the Crown.” That is indeed the one visible bond of unity, and it is a misfortune that through force of circumstances it is so seldom literally visible to the peoples of the Dominions. As modern science, which has long since made the voices of English Kings heard in every continent, annihilates both time and space, that disability may soon be overcome. Meanwhile the fact of the King being domiciled in full sovereignty on the soil of a Dominion, for however brief a space, will impress the world, and not least the King's own subjects, afresh with a realisation of what the British Commonwealth is.

It is immensely important that in these islands we should realise what Canada in particular is. That it is the oldest and nearest Dominion (for Eire disclaims the title of Dominion) has been said already. The fact that it is the nearest means that more Englishmen are familiar with it than with any other. The fact that it is the oldest means that its history has more lessons to inculcate—lessons especially of the value of wise flexibility, as shown when the separate Governments of Upper and Lower Canada, the one predominantly British, the other predominantly French, were merged in one after the Durham Report of 1838, with a generous measure of autonomy, and federation (so valuable in the right conditions and so impracticable in the wrong) succeeded as the result of the British North America Act in 1867. Under that great instrument, not wholly fitted to the spirit of today, in that it debars Canada from amending her own Constitution without the passage of an Act through the British Parliament, the Dominion has prospered for seventy years, its British-speaking and French-speaking elements—the one some fifty, the

¹ In 1913.

other some thirty per cent. of its population—living side by side in harmony and understanding, like the British and Dutch elements in South Africa and the British and Maori in New Zealand. And into the dual texture other strains, Scandinavians, Germans, Poles, have been peacefully woven through decades of immigration.

Canada, of course, has her problems, economic, constitutional, social. Quebec, French and Roman Catholic, is emphasising its own individuality till it threatens to become divisive. Relations between the Provinces and the Federal Government have raised so many problems, particularly financial, that a Royal Commission has been appointed to study their solution. The payment of interest on the Dominion's large external debt lays a heavy strain on the tax-paying capacity of a population of ten millions whose individual welfare hangs largely on the uncertainties of rain or drought or a wheat glut in the markets of the world. And a potential problem necessarily exists in the influence exerted on Canadian life by the great neighbour across the fortless southern frontier. The importance of that must be rated at its right value in justice to Canada herself, for her successful struggle to maintain her individuality unimpaired deserves full appreciation. There is, of course, no conscious attempt at permeation. No responsible citizen of the United States would be in favour of absorbing Canada into the Union if he could. There might be some benefit in the two countries forming a common customs union, but trade treaties are minimising the disadvantages flowing from economic separation. But the greater wealth and population of the United States have their inevitable effects. The Union can support a large variety of newspapers and magazines; and they are widely read in Canada. It can maintain numerous private radio corporations, and their programmes are listened to in Canada. In a hundred ways American ideas make their impact, and in certain spheres American influence undeniably predominates over British. It could hardly be otherwise; contiguity must always have consequences; and the supreme advantage of contiguity in this case is the part it enables Canada to play as mutual interpreter between the United States and Britain.

That is not a fixed but a developing function, and there can be no question that King George, as he goes first to Ottawa and then to Washington, will have his part to play in it. The relation between the American Dominion and the American Union may properly be called ideal. It is everything that the relationship of two adjacent States should be. Canada can never have an hour's anxiety regarding its southern, nor the United States regarding its northern

frontier. Across it either way there are always friends. Friendship, moreover, would in case of need find practical expression. When President Roosevelt, speaking last August on Canadian soil, said that "the Dominion of Canada is part of the sisterhood of the British Empire; I give you my assurance that the people of the United States will not stand idly by if the domination of Canadian soil is threatened by any other Empire," he put no limitation on that pledge, and left it to be inferred that the undertaking would be honoured, as it unquestionably would be, if Canada were threatened as the result of her deliberate entry into some war at Great Britain's side. Mr. Roosevelt was safe in using language of that tenor; the overwhelming majority of his countrymen endorsed it because they knew that the ideals that Canada, alike as Canada and as a partner in the British Commonwealth, stands for are their own. That unwritten pledge may be extended. The New World may again be called on to redress the balance of the Old in a partnership stretching from the Arctic Circle to Cape Horn. Whether Canada takes her place in that is for her alone to determine; it would not loosen a single strand of the ties that bind her to the Commonwealth; she might be part-creator of a greater unity. But that may wait. The immediate prospect is less expansive. As King George is borne westward over that ocean which severs less than it unites, the prayer of all his subjects everywhere will be for his supreme success in a mission which in so far as it succeeds will leave the three English-speaking States bound closer to one another than ever before in their varied histories.

* * * *

The royal errand is accomplished: King George and Queen Elizabeth have begun their journey home. The value of the service they have rendered since they left these shores, the King in his way and the Queen in hers, is in the most literal sense inestimable, for there are no criteria by which it can be measured. The fundamental truth is that they have achieved everything achievable precisely because achievement was never in their minds. They did not go to Canada to draw the constitutional bonds that link that Dominion with the Commonwealth closer; they did not go to the United States to change by a hairbreadth the political relationship between their country and President Roosevelt's. King George, as was most natural and fitting, took the earliest opportunity that offered to visit the oldest and nearest of his Dominions; and it was at least as natural and at least as fitting that when he was so close to the

United States an invitation to visit that great and friendly country should be at once extended and at once accepted.

If no one could have doubted that the Royal visit would be a success, no one on either side of the Atlantic could have believed it would be the success it has been. Only those congenitally insensible to the depths of human feeling could have read unmoved of the unaffected enthusiasm of the vast crowds who awaited the King and Queen in every town and village in Canada—an enthusiasm almost excelled, if that were possible, in the United States—and of the remarkable capacity of the King and Queen to project, in what seemed a direct psychological contact with every individual, personalities of which the keynote is simplicity. That, more than anything, explains the still almost inexplicable success of the visit to the United States. In Canada the King's reception could be counted on; he went there as King of Canada, and Canada had never greeted its King before. To the United States he went as ruler of a friendly country, to which America owes its origin and its language, and as such he could be certain of a welcome that would be certainly courteous, and cordial so far as ordinary courtesy required. For the tumultuous demonstrations of friendship the visit evoked not even a man who knows his people as President Roosevelt does could be prepared. In no other foreign country could King George be greeted so; no other visitor to the United States could have inspired any comparable manifestation of released emotions.

Part of the explanation is the reaction against gratuitous suspicions. It had been suggested freely that King George was coming as political head of his country with ulterior motives. It was evident from the moment he crossed the frontier at Niagara that he came eager to see the United States and to meet its President and its people—for that and that alone. Americans are democratic to their depths. Belief in democracy has the strength of a religious faith. Democracy in France goes unquestioned, for France is a Republic like the United States. Democracy in Britain is always a little suspect, for it seems to chime ill with such an institution as hereditary monarchy; a king can hardly be a democrat, and kingship must always be subtly alien to democracy. A majority of America's 130 millions may have believed that before last week; not one of them can believe it seriously today. By some compelling intuition they recognised in King George as convinced a democrat as any citizen of Great Britain or the United States, a man like themselves, intent before all things on doing his particular work as they were on doing theirs.

Democracy and humanity was the common link, and it is strong enough to stand a searching strain. There were no politics in the Royal visit, but America's understanding appreciation of the King, and our appreciation of America's tremendous greeting, are facts which cannot be a matter of entire indifference to the dictatorships that are challenging democracy in the world.

OUR FUTURE QUEEN

PRINCESS ELIZABETH will be seventeen next Wednesday,¹ which means that she is ceasing to be a child. Her life has so far, most rightly, been spent in her home rather than in the public eye, and her future subjects know relatively little of her, apart from the admirable broadcast talk she gave three years ago to the children of the Empire, at home and overseas, when she was only fourteen. Now that the Princess stands on the threshold of public life, they may feel some natural desire to know something of how she is being prepared for the high office that will one day be hers, and the Queen has shown a gracious readiness to make available such information as is relevant for that purpose.

It is more than a century, though not much more, since a girl of seventeen stood first in succession to the Throne, and some comparison between the heir-presumptive of that day and the heir-presumptive of this is not only inevitable but instructive. What part Princess Victoria's native qualities, and what part the training she received, played respectively in fitting her for the great responsibilities she so greatly sustained is not to be precisely estimated. What is certain is that with one arguable exception she was the greatest Queen this country has known, and among its greatest sovereigns. Yet in all but one respect—a childhood shadowed by a war, which has cut off the opportunity of foreign travel at an age when its educational value would be great—the advantage is with the Princess of today. First and foremost, she is far more fortunate in her parentage and early surroundings. The Duke of Kent had his qualities, but all his associations were German, and his wholly German wife was a well-meaning but limited woman. The secluded household at Kensington, then well outside London, was permeated by the influence of the German *Fräulein* Lehzen, the German Prince

¹ April 21st, 1943.

Leopold, the Duchess of Kent's brother, and the half-German Baron Stockmar. (Sir John Conroy did nothing to offset it, for the Princess most cordially disliked him.)

Princess Elizabeth was born in a house in a London street, and spent most of the first ten years of her life in a house in another London street, Piccadilly, with cars and buses and taxis—all that makes up the swift and shifting life of London—speeding ceaselessly past its windows day and night. It was the comfort of an English home like a thousand others, rather than the luxury, or imagined luxury, of a palace. There the Princess was taught to read by her mother. Till she was seven her education was confined to reading and writing (Princess Victoria was tutored in the latter by the writing-master of Westminster School), French, the piano and dancing. Then Miss Crawford, Scottish, an Edinburgh graduate, well-travelled, a lover of fresh air and exercise, was brought south to institute a very different tutelage from that exercised over the Princess of the 1820's by Fräulein Lehzen. But King George's two daughters—for Princess Elizabeth is happily not, like Princess Victoria, an only child—are well provided with teachers of special subjects, such as French, German and music. Princess Elizabeth today reads history with the Vice-Provost of Eton, on the basis of such works as Trevelyan's *History of England*, which could not be improved on, and Muzzey's *History of the United States*, which for this particular purpose possibly could (but how many English girls of sixteen read American history at all?), together with European history in outline. In Biblical history Canon Crawley, of St. George's Chapel, Windsor, has been her guide. A natural linguist, she speaks French and German fluently and with an excellent accent. She has read some Molière, some Corneille, some Daudet, and she knows many of "Les Cent Meilleurs Poèmes Français" by heart.

The Princess's explorations in the field of English literature are of greater interest, and perhaps greater significance. Time for reading at large is limited, for the formal educational regimen is treated seriously. But in or out of "school hours" she has read most of Shakespeare; *The Canterbury Tales*; a good deal of Coleridge, Keats, Browning and Tennyson; some of Scott, Dickens, Jane Austen, Trollope and R. L. S.; while in lighter moments she turns to Conan Doyle (I hope *The White Company* as well as *Sherlock Holmes*), John Buchan (I hope *Montrose* as well as *Greenmantle*), and P. G. Wodehouse (whose hold was as potent over a Prime Minister of seventy as over a Princess not yet seventeen). That is a wide and wholesome range, that would provide a sound basis of literary know-

ledge and taste for any girl in her last year of school. Compare Princess Victoria writing (when on the verge of seventeen) to Uncle Leopold about Sully's *Memoirs*, in which she finds "a great deal which applies to the present times," and, a little earlier, of Russell's *Modern Europe* and Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*. The advantage again is with our Princess of today.

But life has more sides than the literary, and no picture of the Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret would be just which neglected the delight they take in riding and swimming, in music and singing, in holidays on the moors round Balmoral, and—in the country, where they moved from London early in the war—the production of a pantomime; one has been achieved with marked success and another is in rehearsal now. Here in some respect heredity can be traced; Princess Victoria was a skilful horsewoman, a good musician, and a singularly keen dancer. But there is no reason to suppose that she was a swimmer, and much reason to suppose that she was not. Princess Elizabeth was professionally taught, passed her life-saving tests and gained her badges at the Bath Club, and finds water—with pennies to dive for and the crawl stroke to practise—a hardly less natural element than air. As is generally known, she was a Guide for years—till the war in a company composed mainly of children living in the Royal Mews at Buckingham Palace, and since then in the country, where local children and others from an evacuated school form the nucleus. Now the Princess is a Sea Ranger, and gets manifest interest and enjoyment from the weekly meetings. The scope of the Rangers is wide. A system of pre-war training has been developed, known as Home Emergency Service, which includes First Aid and Home Nursing, Child Welfare, and various forms of Civil Defence. Princess Elizabeth is concerning herself particularly with the last, and acquiring incidentally a good all-round knowledge of electricity. It may be added that she listens regularly to the wireless, and follows the war news closely. In that connexion another parallel presents itself. "Strong sympathy with the Army is a main characteristic of her career," wrote Sir Sidney Lee of the Princess Victoria. "Another trait in the Princess's character," writes one who knows Princess Elizabeth well, "which certainly comes down through generations on the King's side, is the love of the Army and its tradition"—in particular, naturally, of the Grenadier Guards, of which she is Colonel.

Such has been and is the childhood of our future sovereign. As has been said, it is right that her future subjects should know something of it, enough to assure them that the Princess is being fitted

in body and mind against the day—still, we trust, far distant—when the vast responsibilities that attach to the headship of the British Commonwealth will rest on her. A constitutional sovereign's office is no sinecure. There are always State papers to master. Decisions of real moment may be called for. Resignations of Ministries have to be accepted, involving an invitation to someone, not always plainly indicated by circumstance, to form a new Cabinet. King George the Fifth, the moment he succeeded, had to grapple with an acute political controversy. These are not contingencies for which a girl of seventeen can or ought to be specifically prepared. It is enough that she should acquire a working knowledge of the history and constitutional practice of her country, and that her character should develop a quiet strength that can be drawn on as need arises.

That belongs to the Princess's inner life, about which it would be an impertinence to say a word. Of her outer life we know something—as, for example, that she was confirmed at Windsor in March last year—and we shall know more as the moment approaches when she will be appearing more often with her parents, or even without them, on public occasions. That we have known relatively little hitherto is matter rather for satisfaction than regret, for it means that her childhood has been wisely guarded and sheltered, and her personality allowed to develop as it would, unstrained by any undue consciousness of status. “The fierce light which beats upon a throne” probably oppresses King George, and oppressed his father, little, but youth should be spared that white illumination so far as may be. The Princess may have years of service as Heir-Presumptive before her. She may at any moment by the caprice of fate be summoned to the most exalted position in these realms. We can rejoice to know how well the preparation for either lot has been achieved by a training that has never threatened to dim the freshness or mar the simplicity of her girlhood.

Various People

A LEADER EMERGES

THE world needs today beyond all things else confidence and leadership. Any man who on a world scale could furnish the second could create the first. And since last Saturday ¹ the world has been asking itself whether conceivably the man has at last been found. To say that of President Franklin Roosevelt is to put the claim for him very high. He is in no sense yet a world-figure. It is only for the last nine months that he has even been a national figure. Till then he was known simply as the Governor of New York. Today he is facing a sterner test than has confronted any one of his predecessors since Lincoln. By his demeanour in such a crisis he will be judged both by his countrymen and by Europe, and so far as observers in one land at least are concerned—our own—they will be following his efforts with a sympathy no less keen, and will hail his success with an admiration no less unstinted, than the citizens of the country whose fortunes it is his task to re-establish.

But Mr. Roosevelt's achievements still lie mainly in the future. Mainly, but not entirely, for his inaugural speech was an achievement in itself, not in the sense of constituting a mere *tour de force*, but as an utterance which sensibly modified the national situation. It came at a moment when the national financial crisis was visibly reaching its climax. Banks in State after State were confessing bankruptcy. Governor after Governor was imposing a moratorium or some lesser restriction. As the multitudes were assembling in Washington for the inauguration ceremony the news that the paralysis had spread to New York, the financial nerve-centre of the Union, reached the capital. At that moment, when the nation's capacity to withstand the shock and resist panic was still in doubt, the new President sounded the note, of courage, of confidence, and of resolve, calculated to dissipate alarms, to brace the sinews and maintain stability. Mr. Roosevelt spoke of the duty of self-discipline, of the duty of giving as well as taking, of the duty of good neighbourliness in America's foreign relations, and accepted unhesitatingly the call to leadership, even to the extent of assuming, if the occasion demanded it, the "rôle" of a dictator, to be conferred on him by the people's will. A lead, and an inspiring lead, was given at last.

¹ March 4th, 1933.

That is old history now, for as events are moving today what happened a week ago is stale news. But if the speech is old history its effects are not. And the question of whether the brave words were mere words after all has soon been answered. At midday on Saturday Mr. Roosevelt became President. By Monday morning the world knew that he had declared a financial moratorium for four days throughout the United States and summoned Congress in special session (it would not ordinarily meet till December), so that any necessary legislative measures to deal with the crisis might be taken forthwith. No man could have done more. A man hesitant and doubtful of himself would have done disastrously less. By his swiftness of decision Mr. Roosevelt has created the one quality which alone can enable America to weather the storm—confidence. Someone at last is at the helm who disdains to cry peace where there is no peace, and prosperity where there is no prosperity, who faces the facts fearlessly and tells his countrymen in the opening paragraph of his address to them as President that the only thing to fear supremely is fear itself. The consciousness of that goes far to explain the spirit of undisturbed expectancy in which America is accepting her first dose of discipline and awaiting whatever further medicine the President may consider requisite.

The inaugural speech has had one other valuable effect. It has ensured that Congress will comply unhesitatingly with any proposal within reason that the President may lay before it. His ascendancy is completely established, and only some false move on his own part could destroy the prestige he has so rapidly acquired. But neither prestige nor personal ascendancy is going to solve the financial problem. That is an affair of head as well as heart, of intellect more than of emotion. Emotion is definitely a factor, for credit everywhere rests on confidence, and if confidence can be restored the battle is already half won. But it must be confidence in something deserving confidence. To assure the American people that a banking system which has failed them in every single State will never fail them in the future would be to feed them on lies which everyone would recognise as lies. One manifest necessity is the reconstruction of the whole banking organisation of the Union, with the Federal Reserve system as its basis. Banking, like so much else in the United States, has had a dual history, State and Federal, and the time has manifestly come to reorganise the whole system on a Federal scale. In no other way is it possible to distribute the strain and bring strength to the help of weakness in moments of crisis.

But these are of the nature of long-term remedies. 'The imme-

diate need is to give the citizens of the United States a currency with which wages can be paid, the necessities of life bought and sold and the conditions for normal existence restored. It is idle to hope that the banks can simply reopen their doors and continue the transaction of ordinary business as before. Panic may have been averted, and some measure of confidence restored, but a return to what Americans call normalcy must be distant. The trouble goes far back. The immediate cause of the crisis in the State of Michigan, which proved the pioneer in disaster, was the growing realisation that the banks had locked up their funds in mortgages and other forms of advances, none of which could be repaid at once, and some not at all. Once that conviction grew, every depositor rushed to get his money out while there was still money to get out. And as the wave of distrust spread throughout the Union the tendency to private hoarding by the individual found its counterpart on a larger scale in the rush to convert dollars into pounds and francs—mainly pounds. It is easy enough to stop all that by closing the banks, but to close banks means, of course, paralysing business at a moment when business is struggling with inordinate difficulties already. The most effective measure the Government could take—most effective because of the immediate stimulus it would give to public confidence—would be to guarantee bank deposits throughout the Union. But since thousands of banks are definitely insolvent that means transferring a heavy responsibility to the taxpayer's shoulders just when an alarming budget deficit is facing him. On the other hand, to distinguish between the solvent and insolvent concerns would take time, and rapidity of action is essential. There are perplexing problems here for President Roosevelt and his advisers.

And behind them are others more perplexing still. To solve the financial problem, formidable though that task is, would not solve the unemployment problem or save the farmer by securing him an adequate payment for his produce. The operations of the Federal Reserve banks in the open market have done little to raise prices, and Mr. Roosevelt's idea of relieving the cities by getting their surplus populations back to the land is singular, in view of the state of existing settlers on the land. As to the larger question of whether America will go permanently off gold, with the quite incalculable consequences that would have on the currencies of the world, and in particular on the relations between dollars and sterling, all speculation at this moment is futile. The prospect on the whole is that the gold standard will in its essentials be maintained, though with the internal paper currency convertible only into bullion, if at all,

and possibly with some restrictions on gold export. Internationally the crisis has the inevitable effect (in addition to others more direct) of concentrating America's attention on her domestic problems and forcing her to postpone decisions in regard to such matters as the Disarmament and World Economic Conferences, to say nothing of the arms embargo. But President Roosevelt will not be long in realising that it is only through international agreements that his country's own salvation can be achieved, and only by showing herself a good neighbour to the rest of the world in these matters here and now that she can find security for herself. Rough though the immediate path may be, America is as capable of finding a road through a crisis today as we ourselves were eighteen months ago.

MR. BALDWIN

SOME cynics might say that Mr. Baldwin was showing characteristic astuteness in getting out while the going is good—though if they did it would mean that a substantial measure of folly and obtuseness was compounded with their cynicism. The Prime Minister is going, perhaps rightly, because he feels the particular work he had to do is done in so far as he could do it better than another man, and he has no mind to have it said of him while still in office that he has stayed too long and lost his grip, as it has been said of more than one of his predecessors. He goes, in fact, at a moment when he has a firmer hold over both the House of Commons and the country than ever before, and we shall only discover gradually what the nation has lost.

Not, I suppose, that history will rank Stanley Baldwin among the great Prime Ministers of Britain, though the quality of greatness can be denied to no man who has done his country such incomparable service as Mr. Baldwin has rendered in the past six months. That more than anything in his past career, human and intelligible and uncomplicated though he always has been, has given him a closer contact with the common people than any Prime Minister whom most of us can remember, than any, indeed, since Gladstone. And while Gladstone was a dominating figure—no one can imagine Mr. Baldwin carrying through a Midlothian campaign or firing a nation over Bulgarian atrocities—men looked up to Mr. Gladstone from below. He thundered out his great language from the heights.

It is Mr. Baldwin's strength that his speech seems simply the plain speech of the common people—till you try for yourself to put great truths in the form he gives them.

If he is not to be ranked among the great Prime Ministers it is because of the technique of leadership he has chosen to adopt. He has driven his team with a loose rein from the first. Each of his Ministers had his job, and the Prime Minister's job was to leave them to it. During the whole of his last term of office foreign affairs have always predominated in importance over domestic, but no one ever heard of a Baldwin foreign policy. Year after year earlier on, when he was making speeches at home in support of the League of Nations, he took his holiday ninety minutes from Geneva while the League Assembly was sitting, and never once set foot within its walls. It was not slackness. It was not indifference. It was part of a fixed system. The Foreign Secretary was in charge of League affairs, and it was none of the Premier's business to intervene. Long ago in a Rectorial Address he gave his hearers the injunction "Don't talk to the man at the wheel, and don't spit on the deck"—he has used the words lately as a pledge about his own future—and that has consistently guided his relations with his colleagues. It is a virtue no doubt, but it can be, perhaps it has been, pressed too far. Even in the General Strike of 1926 the dominant Minister in the public eye was not the First Minister of the Crown but Mr. Churchill.

"The first qualification in one who aspires to a ruling place in the counsels of a nation," wrote Lord Morley in his admirable study of Walpole, "is that he should have sound and penetrating judgement; the second is ample and accurate knowledge of the business in hand; and the third is tenacity of will and strength of character." A fourth, I suggest, is a reasonable measure of initiative and vigour. Lord Morley's criteria bear no divine authority, but they will serve. They call for one caveat—that in the complexity of modern politics the head of a Cabinet must inevitably rely, like Mr. Baldwin, on the knowledge and judgement of his colleagues far more than was necessary or right in Walpole's day, or even when Lord Morley was writing, some fifty years ago. That needs to be considered in applying to Mr. Baldwin the second of Morley's tests. From the first he certainly need not shrink.

The third is more challenging. The episode of the Hoare-Laval agreement and the subsequent resignation is still a stone for blind eulogists to trip over; there were men then who said that it should have been Mr. Baldwin who resigned, and in the same breath thanked God he hadn't. And one of the Prime Minister's most attractive

habits, that of, as it were, thinking aloud in his speeches, has sometimes suggested a questioning and infirmity of purpose which has little basis in fact. As for the fourth test, it may be claimed with justice that there is little evidence of lack of initiative in a man who can turn a Government out in a twenty minutes' speech, as Mr. Baldwin did at the Carlton Club in 1922. But his three administrations have not, all the same, been marked conspicuously by initiative. The only budget he introduced as Chancellor of the Exchequer was a humdrum affair. And it was not under his Premiership that the nation, for better or worse, exchanged Free Trade for Protection in 1932.

So much for cold analysis. Beyond it all stands out the irrefutable fact that the retiring Prime Minister has in the sixteen years—for they are no more—since he first attained Cabinet rank rendered incalculable service to his party and his country. To which first? it may be asked. The question is not essential. There have no doubt been politicians who "to party gave up what was meant for mankind," but under our Parliamentary system a politician may believe with perfect sincerity that he can serve party and mankind at once, and perhaps serve mankind best through party. Mr. Baldwin quite certainly believed it to be for the country's good in 1922 that a Conservative administration should be in power, for there was as much reason for displacing an outworn coalition then as there was for installing another coalition in a moment of national emergency ten years later. And it was the man who destroyed the first who, by unhesitatingly waiving his unquestioned right to the chief place in the Cabinet, made possible the second.

Mr. Baldwin has never been tempted to carry self-effacement to the point where it becomes a weakness. If he has never said with Chatham, "I am sure that I can save this country and that nobody else can," he has been fully conscious in the past five years that the situation called for the exercise of certain qualities which no other possible Prime Minister possessed in the same degree. As events have proved he judged better than he knew, for no man can be thought of on either Front Bench who could have brought to the abdication crisis the political wisdom, the human sympathy and the inflexibility of purpose which so conspicuously marked the Prime Minister's handling of that unprecedented problem. Perhaps more than that is true. Mr. Baldwin has never paraded his religious faith, but he has never concealed it. And he would, I think, if pressed, confess a humble belief that if there is a divine ordering of human affairs the part it has been his lot to play had some place in it.

The Prime Minister is often described as an English squire. He is that incidentally, but less than the pigs and pipe legend suggests. He is, or was, an ironmaster: one of his more notable speeches in 1925 revealed what he knew, and thought, about the changing relations of masters and men. In 1918, when the new M.P.'s successful at the khaki election took their seats in the House, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury described them to Lord Keynes (who has made the phrase famous) as "a set of hard-faced men who look as if they had done well out of the War." The Financial Secretary to the Treasury had done well out of the War too; every ironmaster had. But no one who read a short letter in *The Times* over the initials F. S. T., mentioning that the writer had given a fifth of his fortune to the Treasury and suggesting that others should do likewise, realised that those initials stood for the office which Mr. Baldwin then held.

But English squire he undoubtedly is, as well as ironmaster, squire and ironmaster and politician and scholar—he has been President of the Classical Association—loving literature and taking the best of it into his being, and drawing on it with rare judgement to enrich his speeches. He has learned how to cultivate an inner peace. Like Grey, whom on one side he greatly resembles, he finds everything he cares for most in Wordsworth; if any nefarious person should purloin Earl Baldwin's suitcase during his coming holiday I predict that he will find in it a copy of "The Prelude" or "The Excursion," or both. Wordsworth himself wrote of one of the greatest figures in Parliamentary history:

"A power is passing from the earth
To breathless Nature's dark abyss."

We are threatened with no such loss as that. The Prime Minister is not passing from the earth, and the second line is no more than an approximate characterisation of the House of Lords. But a power, beyond all question, is passing from the House of Commons—a power that has worked ceaselessly and effectively to keep the torch of democracy burning bright in these islands, a power that has commanded the full confidence of every Dominion and maintained the unity of the Commonwealth unimpaired, a power resting, as so often in the history of Parliament, on character first and on political ability only second. Mr. Baldwin is not forsaking public life. So long as he survives he will retain a unique hold on the public ear and the public regard. And while nothing, we may be certain, will move him from his refusal to interfere with the man at the wheel,

he has a rich contribution yet to make in other fields to the life of the country of which he is so distinguished, so characteristic and so unassuming a citizen.

And at the end of all he may come to be remembered less as a great Conservative or a great Parliamentary—House of Commons man though he is to his marrow—or a great Prime Minister than as a great Englishman.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: PROSPECT AND RETROSPECT

It is an odd thing that what most people know about the new Prime Minister consists in the main not of what he is but of what he is not. He is not of the landed gentry who through so many centuries have ruled England. He is not a University man—for Mason College in the 'eighties was not of university rank. Brought up a Unitarian, he is not, I believe, a member of the Church of England. There is in him, in fact, none of the stuff out of which Conservative leaders are made, and his rise to the chief position in his party as well as in the Cabinet is a measure of the distance the Conservative Party has travelled in the last generation. Gone, perhaps for ever, are the old great days of Hatfield supremacy, uncontested from 1881 for thirty years. The Tories, like the Whigs before them, had to learn to look away from the land. Balfour was followed by a Scots-Canadian business man, and the Scots-Canadian business man by an English business man. But Bonar Law did at least know one Dominion; our new Prime Minister cannot claim that (though he lived in the Bahamas for seven years and made one visit—historic or notorious, as you choose—to Ottawa). And Baldwin, squire as well as iron-founder, had his roots in the soil. Mr. Chamberlain is a townsman pure and simple, first City Councillor and then Lord Mayor of the greatest business centre in the kingdom outside London. He is far less of a typical Conservative than his half-brother Austen, for Sir Austen had absorbed the Tory tradition of the House of Commons for twenty-five years before Neville entered it; Cambridge added to Rugby had given the elder brother pretensions to literary culture with which the Prime Minister is not credited, and he had, with all his geniality, something of the grand manner that sits so well on a Tory leader. Neville Chamberlain remained, and remains, the plain citizen from Birmingham—and not many cities have sent a larger army of competent plain men into various fields of public life.

The one thing everybody knows about the new Prime Minister is that he is a fisherman. But that means next to nothing. What matters about a fisherman is not whether he catches fish but what he thinks about in the protracted opportunities for reflection which the recreation affords. They can be used to plan a charity or plot a crime, to compose a sonnet or a fraudulent prospectus. One thing Mr. Chamberlain may be assumed to think about in such moments is social reform, for he is his father's son, and a spark of the old radicalism of the Unauthorised Programme—enough conceivably to start a fire—is alight in him yet. Competent in every administrative post he has ever filled, he was particularly competent at the Ministry of Health, where he had work to do that he cared for doing. Houses were needed and he got houses built. The burden of rates was pressing intolerably on industry and he carried an imposing de-rating measure through. The old Boards of Guardians had served their purpose and he swept them away and put Public Assistance Committees in their place. Obviously a Minister of Health who did things. It was the same at the Treasury. A comparison between the state of the national finances in 1932 and their state in 1937 is all Mr. Chamberlain need point to as testimonial. It was not all his doing; there has been a world recovery as well as a British recovery. And both the world and Great Britain might have recovered sooner if the Chancellor's doses of Protection and Imperial Preference had been less drastic. But there the record stands, and no one can deny that, in spite of N.D.C.,¹ it does the Prime Minister credit.

And now? And now this man who showed first that he could run a city, and then that he could run one Government department after another with marked competence, is called on to run an Empire—and an Empire about which, so far as has yet appeared, he knows a good deal less than several of his colleagues. Can he rise to it? That we must wait to see, but it would be as unwise to say No as Yes. For there is no sufficient reason why the record of competence should suddenly stop. Closely studied, the Prime Minister gives the impression of possessing unsuspected possibilities. No man develops a new personality at 68, but men have surprised their fellows, and surprised them favourably, at greater ages than that. Campbell-Bannerman did, for one.

Not many people have credited the Prime Minister with much interest in foreign politics. We may find that our ideas on that need revising. As Chancellor, Mr. Chamberlain was in closer touch with

¹ The National Defence Contribution imposed by Mr. Chamberlain in 1937 on an excess-profits basis.

Mr. Eden than ever openly appeared, and his concern with foreign policy will not diminish now. There is ground for believing on the contrary it will considerably increase—and that may create a new situation. In normal times a Foreign Secretary is perpetually subject to two dominating influences, that of his Prime Minister and that of his Permanent Under-Secretary—who counts for much more than the occupant of a similar position in any other Department. The two influences may not coincide, and sometimes one may be the more powerful, sometimes the other. When the three personalities concerned were Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Eden and Sir Robert Vansittart there is not much doubt that the stronger pull on the Foreign Secretary came from his own side of Downing Street, not from No. 10 across the road. With Mr. Chamberlain at No. 10 that assumption may have to be reconsidered. Not that the Prime Minister means to be his own Foreign Minister, as Mr. Lloyd George was when Lord Curzon held the seals and signed passports, or that Mr. Eden's position will necessarily be weaker or more difficult. It may very well be easier and stronger. With a Prime Minister not specially interested in foreign affairs the Foreign Secretary has had to fight his own battles in Cabinet, and there were always certain forces hostile to his ideas there. With a Prime Minister who studies foreign policy and agrees with his Foreign Secretary in essentials a combination decisive in its results is created. If, on the other hand, he disagrees, the Foreign Secretary's position becomes impossible and is no doubt soon vacated. There is nothing in past relations between Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Eden to make that likely in this case.

But where in fact does the Prime Minister stand in regard to foreign affairs? His declarations in that field have not been numerous and not always happy. He caused some little stir by informing Lobby Correspondents rather gratuitously, when the then Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary were negotiating at Stresa in 1935 that Britain was resolutely opposed to new commitments, and a casual remark he once made about the Middle West in reply to a question about War Debts at a Press luncheon is still remembered against him in America. But he did once—in March of last year—speak at length on foreign affairs in the House of Commons, declaring that the League of Nations was still the keystone of the Government's policy, that we were interested in the East as well as in the West of Europe, and that League obligations applied equally whether aggression was committed in the East or the West. The value of that, of course, depends on what respect would be paid to League obligations, as distinct from Locarno, in the West, and on that Mr.

Chamberlain—who had covered himself by implying that we should not be morally bound by our obligations till we could rely on the collective action of all League States against an aggressor—was by no means specific. All he has said suggests that he would be a typical British empiricist, shaping his policy in the light of the exigencies of the moment, with a more conspicuous tendency than his predecessor to firmness at critical moments.

Mr. Baldwin, I have suggested, drove his team with a loose rein. Mr. Chamberlain is no martinet, but I doubt if he believes in loose reins. When he takes on a job it is his pride to do it competently, and a Prime Minister is a Prime Minister. It may be part of his business to prevent his colleagues' ideas from clashing, but another part of it is to put occasional ideas of his own forward and make them Cabinet policy. That, if I do not misread him, is how the new Prime Minister conceives his office. As head of a Government he is admittedly an unknown quantity, though less so than Mr. Baldwin was when his swift rise had taken him to the top. The least he is entitled to ask for is a fair chance and fair criticism. He is a direct man and a sincere man, a man of courage and a man of honour. Whether he is a man of vision, capable of seeing beyond the day after tomorrow, and of directing the tide of events instead of drifting with them—in regard particularly to such matters as the American debt and the freeing of trade—has still to be disclosed.

Neville Chamberlain has died before the dust of controversy that his Premiership stirred up has begun to settle. He has been the object of bitter criticism, almost in some quarters of bitter hate. Some of the criticism was fair, much unfair. Parrot-cries about appeasement and the old men of Munich were current coin on the lips, or pen-points, of people who could not have argued intelligently about Munich for thirty seconds. There is plenty of ground for deciding, after an unprejudiced balance of all the factors, that however well-intentioned Mr. Chamberlain's policy at Munich was it was fundamentally wrong, just as there is plenty of ground for deciding the opposite. But condemnation dictated by confused emotion is one of democracy's worst vices, and the ex-Prime Minister has been the latest victim of it. If his death necessitates some assessment of his life it can only be an interim assessment, for history cannot write its dispassionate verdict yet. A decade of the honourable retirement he so well deserved would have left perspectives clearer and made judgements surer and more discerning.

Any estimate on the morrow of a death must be based on truth, tempered, but never obscured, by charity. Virtues may be stressed, but not so that shortcomings are blotted out. Neville Chamberlain's outstanding virtue was an unswerving conscientiousness, a self-sacrificing sense of duty and, as part of that, an immense and tireless industry. He was not an ambitious man. His father had designated Austen as the statesman; Neville was to stick to business life—even municipal activities were only an afterthought—and the younger son accepted his destiny without demur. He found himself at Westminster through one of Mr. Lloyd George's impulses. A National Service Department was created in 1916 and a Director to run it was wanted on the spur of the moment. Why not the Lord Mayor of Birmingham? someone suggested. Admirable. Austen was commissioned to lay hands on Neville forthwith, offer him the post and see that he took it. "I don't like it," Neville said. "I know I *can* do my present work. I don't know about this. It will be all new to me, but I suppose I have no right to refuse." So he accepted. The thing was a fiasco because the post had never been thought out. Its creation had served as window-dressing; after that the new Director mattered little to anyone. But it had elicited the disclosure of one of his rules of life—"I suppose I have no right to refuse."

In the same spirit he accepted the leadership of the Conservative Party in 1930. "His unselfishness in taking it even temporarily," wrote Sir Austen, "was recognised on all hands." In the same spirit, again, he consented to be Postmaster-General in Mr. Bonar Law's administration in 1922, after the downfall of the Coalition Government and a split which left Austen Chamberlain in one camp and Neville in the other; it was the sternest strain the remarkable affection which existed between the two brothers ever had to bear. If he may be said to have had any ambition it came late in life—not to be Prime Minister; that was a duty which he had "no right to refuse"; but to realise his father's dream and commit his country to a Protectionist policy. To introduce a Tariff Reform budget in the House of Commons and go to Ottawa as head of a British delegation to institute Imperial Preference was a greater satisfaction than to kiss hands as First Lord of the Treasury in succession to Mr. Baldwin.

For a nation of shopkeepers we have been strangely reluctant to put business men in the chief place in the State. It is curious, too, that when in the twentieth century that innovation was countenanced it should be the aristocratic party which found the candidates, in

Bonar Law and Baldwin and Neville Chamberlain. Whatever may be the case of the two former, it is easy to trace the effect of a business training in Neville Chamberlain's efficient administration as Minister of Health and his grasp of detail as member of the War Cabinet in the few months when he guided the work of various Cabinet Committees after his resignation of the Premiership. In that respect at least he was abler than he let men see. For he was a reticent man, if not a shy man, as he was a simple and unimaginative man. What he said of Austen: "He was always what Dr. Johnson used to describe as a 'clubbable' man; that is to say, he was naturally sociable and delightful in company," denoted one of the marked differences between the brothers.

He was not, as a rule, fortunate in speech. He could make a plain statement admirably. His war surveys in the House of Commons, pedestrian though they may seem beside Mr. Churchill's brilliant reviews, served their purpose well and won deserved approval. Nothing, moreover, could have been more impressive in its simplicity than the wireless announcement to the nation of war with Germany, or of the speaker's own resignation of the Premiership last May. But his capacity for saying the wrong thing on occasion was considerable. The classic example, of course, was the assurance of "Peace in our time" after Munich. That might be forgiven an exhausted man, reacting after an almost intolerable strain. But there was no such excuse for the declaration, when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the continuance of sanctions against Italy was "midsummer madness," though no abandonment of sanctions had been announced by the Government of which he was a member. And the cold objectivity of his speech in the House of Commons on the occupation of Prague was only in part redeemed by the warm denunciation of the crime in his address to the Chamber of Commerce at Birmingham twenty-four hours later.

That event, the seizure of the whole of Czechoslovakia by Hitler, was the turning-point in Chamberlain's policy. Till then he had believed, like a great many honest and intelligent Englishmen, that Hitler had a fixed and limited ambition, to gather all German populations within the aegis of the Reich, and peace at that price was, in Chamberlain's view, better at least than a European war. That was one explanation of his deal at Munich. It was not the only one. There was another at least as potent. Great Britain at the time of Munich was in no condition to fight. Still less was France, with her almost non-existent air force—even if she had been willing to fight at all for the Czechs. Chamberlain, it may be said, who had

been a leading member, indeed the second member, of the Cabinet for seven years, must bear full responsibility for Britain's defencelessness. He must. But it does not lie with political critics who consistently and bitterly opposed rearmament through the vital years of the middle 'thirties to reproach the Government in which Mr. Chamberlain was first deputy-leader and then leader with failing to carry through a policy which the Opposition did everything it could to thwart.

That does not shake the conclusion that for Mr. Chamberlain to determine to be his own Foreign Minister was a grave mistake. Mr. Eden resigned the Foreign Office in 1938 because he believed in standing up to Mussolini, while the Prime Minister preferred a pact. There is little doubt now which was right. Those critical days were no time for a business man to make his *début* as diplomat plenipotentiary, still less to accompany that departure by the substitution of the Chief Industrial Adviser to H.M. Government for the Chief Diplomatic Adviser as personal mentor and consultant. Marshal Pétain thought he could negotiate with Herr Hitler as one soldier with another. Mr. Chamberlain thought he could strike a bargain with him as one business man with another. Both were wrong. Neither realised that only the devil could negotiate with Hitler on equal terms, and both have paid (and forced on others) a heavy penalty for that oversight. Mr. Chamberlain's fault was not in choosing peace instead of war at Munich—there was no alternative unless he was ready to choose defeat, and the breathing-space he secured has proved our salvation—but in his responsibility for the position in which his country stood at Munich and in the profoundly mistaken enthusiasm with which he presented the Munich agreement to Parliament and people as a great and honourable achievement instead of as a disaster only tolerable as a means of averting (though it did not in fact avert) something even worse. More than that need not be said of Munich. Less cannot be.

And this must be added. At what moment the drift to war could have been checked will always be a matter of argument, but the situation had got very nearly past retrieving before Mr. Chamberlain became Prime Minister. If it be a sin to strive for peace he was no doubt the most offending soul alive. He strove to the very edge of war, and failed, but his striving will never weigh in the scale against him. If he had courted war sooner he might have taken a divided country into it. His foreign policy will long, perhaps always, remain a subject of sharp contention. But on his courage, his unswerving integrity, his utterly selfless devotion to duty as he saw it, there can

never be two opinions. And those are qualities which this country rates high in its public servants. For them at least history will give Neville Chamberlain credit.

TWO VIEWS OF J. R. M.

To a generation which remembers Ramsay MacDonald chiefly as a tired, rather incoherent man, repudiated, sometimes even execrated, by the party he did so much to create, Lord Elton's biography¹ should have a special value. He is handling a subject rich in possibilities—the romance of a man born in poverty of an unmarried mother, who rose to be Prime Minister of Great Britain in three administrations, carving his way unaided (except, most notably, by his wife) from the lowest step to the highest—and he has dealt with it adequately. Too little is remembered of MacDonald's childhood, his birth at Lossiemouth, his education at a Kirk school at eightpence a month, followed by management of a boys' guild at Bristol, where he first came in touch with Socialism in the form of a branch of Hyndman's Democratic Federation, then by a minor post, at 10s. a week, at the Cyclists' Touring Club in London (where "my food-bill worked out at about 7d. or 8d. a day"), and finally—for this was both permanence and affluence—by appointment as private secretary to Mr. Thomas Lough, the Liberal M.P., at £75 a year, rising to £100.

Lord Elton's only disqualification as biographer is the fact that at this point in MacDonald's career he was not yet born, and he can have been in little personal touch with his subject till the closing years of the period covered by the present volume. But abundant material regarding MacDonald's early life exists, and Lord Elton has made skilful use of it. Yet the testimony of contemporaries is needed, for only they can portray MacDonald as he was. He was never an easy man to know; he is described in his Bristol days as "painfully shy," and in later years loneliness and various hostilities had driven him in upon himself. But in one book, the memoir of his wife, of which Lord Elton goes so far as to say that "it is perhaps the most moving tribute in our language from a husband to a wife,"

¹ *The Life of James Ramsay MacDonald* (1866-1919), by Lord Elton (Collins, 18s.).

MacDonald revealed himself as not his most intimate friend (if he had ever had one) could have portrayed him; there are few comparable books in the English language, though Lord Elton goes rather far in suggesting that there are none. If the obvious defects in MacDonald's character (Lord Elton says that he was "sensitive but not touchy"; I think he was both) are analysed they will be found to be such as Margaret MacDonald's sympathy and understanding would have corrected or checked at birth. His devotion to his wife was the noblest thing in his life. Lord Elton makes the interesting suggestion that his passionate hatred of war was due in no small measure to the fact that it was with her that he had visited South Africa soon after the Peace of Vereeniging and seen for himself the desolation war can leave in its train.

Margaret Gladstone, at any rate, did one thing. Her private income put the struggling young journalist-secretary beyond financial anxieties, and to that extent made a political career possible. It is, of course, politician rather than husband and father that is portrayed in these pages, and rightly; but so much of MacDonald's humanity was often hidden from the common gaze that it is well for it to be given full appreciation here. His political career dates from 1900, when he became secretary of the Labour Representation Committee (though he had stood at Southampton as an I.L.P. candidate in 1895 and been hopelessly beaten), and it ended, for all practical purposes, when he transferred the Premiership in the first National Government to Mr. Baldwin in 1935. Lord Elton's present volume carries the story to 1919. It was not till 1906 that MacDonald got into Parliament as member for Leicester, and he stayed there till the "coupon" election of 1918 lost him his seat. During all those years he was one of the chief officials—first secretary, then chairman, then treasurer—of the Labour Party into which the old L.R.C. had evolved, and it is a tribute to the position he held in the Party councils that during the war years, when he was politically in the wilderness, no serious attempt was ever made to supersede him.

Lord Elton makes it abundantly clear that MacDonald was the Party's chief intellectual asset, his nearest rival in that sphere being probably Snowden. Fortunately his Socialism was of the evolutionary order, and he could accommodate himself sufficiently to the slow-paced and solid trade unionists who then, even more than now, formed the core of the Party. He had travelled by way of the S.D.F. through the Fabian Society to the philosophic position in which he settled down, based on a firm belief in progress and organic

growth, and a profound repugnance to the violence and destructiveness of revolution. He wrote books on Socialism, but Socialism in the abstract figured little in his public speeches. And on social questions he could travel far from the standpoint of the orthodox Left, as in the debate on unemployment insurance in 1911, when he observed, in words that are singularly pertinent today, that

“he did not see why a condition of training, why some educational condition, should not be imposed as a condition of the receiving of this benefit. It would be an enormous gain to the State and to the people themselves if the period of unemployment (particularly if it were a substantial period) could be utilised.”

Generally speaking, Socialism was for MacDonald the problem of achieving the ideal within the limits of the possible.

On MacDonald's position through the War years Lord Elton is particularly interesting. The attitude he adopted at the outset, that he would fight for Britain if Britain were in danger, but not in a French war or a Russian war, severed him from the bulk of his Party and made him a pariah in the country. Lord Elton maintains that MacDonald was never a pacifist, and on the whole he makes good the claim, if a pacifist is a man who could never fight at all; MacDonald always insisted that in certain causes he would fight, and it is demonstrated, incidentally, that he had ample physical courage. But a pacifist he unquestionably was in the sense that his one concern was the making of peace, the framing of the treaty that should end the war. Politically that worked out curiously. He was driven from 1914 and onwards to the Left of his Party, but never out of it. That was the fact that governed the future. As a leading figure in the newly formed Union of Democratic Control, he gathered round him a number of pacifist intellectuals, many of them ex-Liberals, and was thus able, when old rifts were closed, to bring into the Party an element which contributed substantially to its post-War electoral and Parliamentary successes. None of that would have been possible if Labour men like Henderson and Thomas, who dissented fundamentally from MacDonald's views on the War, had not insisted that the Party unity was important enough for even differences so profound to be tolerated. So, and only so, was the path to the MacDonald Premiership in 1924 kept open.

Here and there Lord Elton's judgements inevitably challenge some dissent. His readers are likely, on the whole, to be more critical of MacDonald and his policy at certain points than he is. But the

volume is a sincere and competent piece of portraiture, both political and personal.

* * * *

The author of any work of this type is presumably actuated by considerations either of public duty or private pleasure; such readers as the present volume¹ may attract will be able to form their own opinion as to which predominated in this case. Mr. MacNeill Weir was Parliamentary Private Secretary to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald from 1924-31; to that fact is mainly, if not solely, due whatever impression he has made on the public consciousness. Some distinction attaches to the post of Parliamentary Private Secretary to a Prime Minister or Leader of the Opposition. It is an office in which much confidential information comes to the ears of the P.P.S., and in which a relationship of perfect loyalty is postulated by the mere acceptance of the position.

Mr. Weir, it must be assumed, accepted the office out of public duty, with the idea of minimising the consequences of his chief's all too palpable defects, even if he could not eradicate them. For he was under no illusion about Mr. MacDonald when he became P.P.S. to him in 1924. He had seen him from the first as self-seeking, unprincipled, disloyal, a careerist, a rhetorician, an inveterate calculator of the main chance. As far back as 1914 Mr. Weir, gifted most fortunately with a superhuman insight into the secret motives of the then Leader of the Labour Party, realised that MacDonald, when he was framing his speech on August 3rd, had only one purpose in view, to further his own political prospects:

"The easy way of compromise was the way of safety. He would avoid the choice of alternatives by taking both. He would so speak as to give general support to the policy of the Government in standing by an endangered Belgium and a threatened France. He would thus vindicate his patriotism. But he would salve his conscience by attacking Grey. . . . So he made his decision. So he planned his speech. It was a hybrid product, born of his fears, his ambitions and his hopes. There would be something in it for everybody."

When the orator thus unerringly estimated by Mr. Weir became Prime Minister he invited Mr. Weir to become his P.P.S., and Mr. Weir accepted. Mr. Weir feels it requisite to express himself very virtuously and at considerable length on the arrangement by which

¹ *The Tragedy of Ramsay MacDonald*, by L. MacNeill Weir, M.P. (Secker & Warburg, 1938.).

Mr. MacDonald in that year was supplied with a motor-car by Sir Alexander Grant. But Mr. Weir remained P.P.S. Mr. Weir has to record with regret how, still in 1924, MacDonald bungled the Campbell case and quibbled over the Zinoviev Letter; but Mr. Weir remained P.P.S. He then skips two years and describes MacDonald's "double dealing" over the General Strike; but Mr. Weir remained P.P.S. In 1929 MacDonald came back to office with a "determination to 'stay put' at all costs." He pursued his "invariable practice of interfering with the work of his colleagues"; when either Snowden or Henderson was making good, MacDonald was sure to butt in to minimise their achievement"; but Mr. Weir remained his P.P.S. The Prime Minister became increasingly aloof; "Ministers found him constantly and capriciously intervening to prevent, to modify, or to delay executive action"; worse than that, "he had been in touch with Baldwin"; Mr. Weir "had repeatedly warned MacDonald of the danger to his leadership"—and he remained his P.P.S. Yet Mr. Weir, it would seem, had clearly foreseen MacDonald's defection from his Party, and he writes in great detail, and (in his preface) with considerable portentousness, of the negotiations leading up to the formation of the National Government. At that point even the faithful Mr. Weir ended his intimate association with a leader whose every act and word for seven years must, on his own showing, have been a perpetual laceration to his highmindedness.

The truth is, of course, that Ramsay MacDonald's faults were many and obvious, but they were superficial rather than grave. He was vain, he was touchy, he took his place with rather too patent satisfaction in a social *milieu* very different from that of his youth. But that his qualities outweighed his defects can hardly be questioned by anyone who surveys his political career as a whole; it would be a damning comment on democracy if such a politician as Mr. Weir depicts could be accepted by a great Party as a leader for thirty years and hold the office of Prime Minister in three Governments. Mr. Weir does not survey it as a whole; he is studiously selective; there is not a word, for example, about the part MacDonald played as Chairman of the Naval Conference of 1930, in which he put a solid achievement to his credit; or about much else that is relevant. However, people with a superfluity of time on their hands and of money in their pockets, and to whom the literature of detraction so fashionable in some circles today makes appeal, should undoubtedly buy this book and read it. But do not let them think when they have done that that they have seen MacDonald as he was.

SIR AUSTEN, YOUNG AND OLD

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN entered the House of Commons as Member for East Worcestershire in 1892 at the age of 29. He obtained minor office in 1895, and became Postmaster-General with a seat in the Cabinet in 1902 and Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1904. Conspicuous though he was throughout his public life for integrity and an almost quixotic loyalty, he was not among the great pre-War figures, and the single volume which Professor Trevelyan found adequate for Lord Grey might well be thought sufficient for Sir Austen. Sir Charles Petrie, however, has chosen, or been invited, to present not merely a "Life" but a "Life and Letters,"¹ and if the standard of spaciousness set by Joseph Chamberlain's biographer is accepted, two volumes for Austen (as Sir Charles Petrie has very sensibly and conveniently decided to call him throughout) are no doubt moderate measure.

Sir Charles explains that his method has been to let his subject, so far as possible, speak for himself through his letters and speeches, while the biographer, or editor, paints in the background in some detail. The result is not altogether satisfactory. There is too much wholesale reproduction of letters, political speeches and election addresses (we are not, for example, materially the better in 1939 for knowing that in 1892 "Aunt Mary went up to see Cecily, who is laid up with jaundice, and returned to find Millicent had caught the mumps; Edith Beale has got them, too, and, worst of all, Auntie fell down yesterday and broke her collar-bone"), and the background gets sometimes too much paint, sometimes too little. When Sir Edmund Gosse writes from Trinity that Austen "seems the cleverest young fellow here, by what people say," the next sentence, which reads "Austen took his degree in the summer of 1885," seems deliberately to omit the one fact—what degree—that would vindicate Gosse's verdict or otherwise. The South African War, with which the name of Chamberlain is not inconspicuously associated, gets for background the single inadequate, not to say misleading, sentence: "On October 9th, 1899, the Boer Republics sent their ultimatum, and three days later the South African War began," whereas the Curragh affair in 1914, which concerned Austen no more than any other Conservative leader and a good deal less than some, is treated with a wealth of interesting but largely irrelevant detail.

But though Sir Charles Petrie is at no great pains to paint a

¹ *The Life and Letters of the Rt. Hon. Austen Chamberlain*, by Sir Charles Petrie (Cassell: two vols., 16s. each).

portrait, preferring, as he says, to leave his subject to speak for himself, a clear enough picture of a high-minded, conscientious, rather unimaginative Conservative politician does emerge. We are shown too little of Austen the man—an occasional reference to his family affection, his love of Nature or his interest in pictures is not enough, and the only light thrown on the religious side of his life is an extract from a letter written on Easter Day, 1914, mentioning that "It is on this day of all others, not even excepting Christmas Day, that I always feel regret that I cannot join Ivy [his wife] at Communion." It was not agnosticism that barred the way, but the fact that, as he frequently mentioned in speeches on the Education Bills or Disestablishment, he was and remained a Nonconformist.

Austen had the advantage and disadvantage of being his father's son. It made his entry into political life obvious and easy, but the feeling that he was called to carry on his father's work gave Tariff Reform a supremacy over all his other political interests which, left to himself, he might not have accorded it. Nothing laid such strain on his personal and party loyalties as the repeated efforts first of Balfour and then of Bonar Law to evade acceptance of the undiluted Protectionist doctrine, food-taxes and all. In no other connexion does asperity so mingle with distress as in his letters to his leaders on the tariff gospel and their derogation from it. But in the face of even such disappointment Austen's unfailing loyalty stood the strain. It was a loyalty equally to his leaders and to his Party. Nowhere is that more conspicuous than in the matter of the leadership itself. "I will not allow myself to be run against Balfour for the leadership," he wrote in 1910 to an ardent apostle of Protectionism angered by A. J. B.'s dexterous evasions. "I will not join any movement, open or secret, directed against him, nor will I allow myself to be used in opposition to him"; and when the question of the actual successor had to be decided, and Bonar Law slipped in as *tertius gaudens* between Austen and Walter Long, Austen deals trenchantly with the suggestion someone had made to him that he should support Long in the knowledge that the latter would prove unequal to the post, and then Austen would succeed unopposed. The thought, "inspired by Satan," had, he admitted, crossed his mind, but to entertain it would be to sacrifice the Party. That was decisive. The Party must be preserved at any cost. Austen never doubted that, and he never displayed the strength of his conviction more clearly than when Bonar Law, to his (Austen's) bitter disappointment, consented, in 1913, to subordinate the fiscal campaign to the anti-Home Rule campaign.

"I have been too long engaged in politics," he told his constituents, "to suppose that I can always have my own way, too long to sulk because I cannot now persuade the Party to take a course in this one matter which I believe to be alike the right course and the wise course; and though I have to admit my disappointment and acknowledge my fears, I will do my best in the future, as I have done my best in the past, to support my leaders and co-operate with my political friends." An admirable statement of a good party man's creed.

Sir Austen is shown by Sir Charles Petrie to have played a larger part behind the scenes than was commonly realised. It was he who in 1906 composed the letters between Balfour and Joseph Chamberlain registering their agreement on the Party's fiscal policy; and—far more important—it was he who eight years later drafted the statement which Bonar Law and Lansdowne handed to Asquith on August 2nd, 1914, urging that Britain should support France and Russia, and promising the united backing of the Conservative Party. Austen's own convictions on that subject had deep roots. At twenty-four he had attended Treitschke's lectures in Berlin, and they disturbed him. ("Treitschke has opened to me a new side of the German character—a narrow-minded, proud, intolerant Prussian chauvinism.") In 1904 he predicted that when ever war came Germany would invade Belgium. In 1908 Wolf-Meternich, the German Ambassador, had asked him, "Why are you trying to isolate us?" and Austen had said plainly what he thought of a nation beginning to preach and prepare for a third "inevitable war." The Foreign Secretary of 1924 had begun his study of the chief problem in foreign politics early.

* * * *

Sir Charles Petrie's second volume confirms the impression created by his first, that a *Life of Sir Austen* on a less ambitious scale would have been more successful. The inclusion of the words "and Letters" in the title does not establish the wisdom of joining up slabs of spoken and written matter by narrative that is conscientious rather than distinguished, though some citations, of course, were to be desired. One, a letter written from Locarno to Sir William Tyrrell two days after the famous treaty had been initialled, reveals in its unrestrained exaltation (from the first sentence, "the wonderful week is over," to the last, "I felt myself a little child again in spirit") a side of Sir Austen rarely, if ever, again disclosed in his public life. It is one of the few glimpses Sir Charles Petrie gives us of the essential man.

The present volume deals with the period from the outbreak of war in 1914 to Sir Austen's death in 1937. It covers, therefore, three incidents which revealed the spirit of chivalrous self-abnegation which always marked him—when he resigned from the India Office over the Mesopotamia Commission Report in 1917; when he declined the reversion to the Premiership (offered by Bonar Law through Lord Beaverbrook) in 1923 in favour of Mr. Stanley Baldwin; and when he voluntarily abandoned the thought of further office in 1931. In the period concerned Sir Austen held many offices, but by far the most congenial to him was the Foreign Secretaryship, and he was in secret deeply hurt when, on the formation of the National Government in 1931, the Prime Minister offered him, not a return to the Foreign Office, but the Admiralty, which he accepted with reluctance out of public spirit. As far back as 1917 his brother Neville had written: "I have always felt the F.O. was your job." *Per contra*, it is recorded, of the year 1930, that all Sir Austen's hopes "were based upon his brother succeeding Mr. Baldwin in the leadership, and thus eventually becoming Prime Minister." He died just two months too soon to see the final hope realised.

The best part of this volume is the miscellany it contains of Sir Austen's judgements, mostly shrewd and sound, on men and things. For example:

"In my view there is only one man who by his studies and his special abilities and aptitudes is marked out for it [a Ministry of Defence], and that man is Winston Churchill. I don't suppose that S. B. will offer it to him and I don't think Neville would wish him back, but they are both wrong. He is the right man for that post, and in such dangerous times that ought to be decisive." (1936.)

"You will have seen that Simon has resigned. He is a very able man, but I cannot say that I think he will be any great loss to a Government whose business it is to carry on war." (1916.)

"I urged him [Dollfuss] to put his whole case before Simon as strongly as he could, but will Simon understand or act? Alas! none of them seem to turn to Simon or to trust him. It is a terrible misfortune." (1933.)

"Hore-Belisha is a young man in a hurry, who may easily involve his motor-coach in a bad smash if he is not more careful." (1935.)

"I thought Mussolini a strong man of singular charm, and I suspected of not a little tenderness and loneliness of heart. . . . I trust his word when given, and I think we might easily go far before finding an Italian with whom it would be as easy for the British Government to work." (1925.)

This last verdict, it may be noted, did not prevent Sir Austen from supporting the "sanctions" policy against Italy in 1935, and even stating: "I think it was a great mistake to say to Italy that in no circumstances should we cut her communications."

Sir Charles Petrie is distressingly casual about dates, and in various other respects he disappoints reasonable expectations. One brief reference to Sir Austen's religious faith serves only to emphasise the otherwise complete silence about that side of his life. His literary tastes (see his own *Down the Years* for his argument with Mr. Balfour about the most attractive heroine in literature, and Balfour's surprising choice) are almost as summarily treated. On the political side, moreover, there is a good deal to seek. Sir Charles shows no appreciation of the decisive part played by Mr. Baldwin's speech at the Carlton Club meeting which ended Mr. Lloyd George's Coalition Government in 1922; he does not appear to realise that what he calls Sir Austen's speech to the League Council in March 1925, condemning the Geneva Protocol, was in fact a Cabinet memorandum written by Lord Balfour; he gives no adequate indication of the responsibility borne by Sir Austen for the trouble over Germany's seat on the League Council in March 1926, owing to the rash promise he had given to the Spanish delegate to support Spain's claim to a permanent seat; he says nothing of the speech on slums and housing in which, in his *Elder Statesman* days, Sir Austen revealed to a deeply impressed House a flash of his father's old social reform fire; and he gravely under-rates the importance of Sir Austen's historic memorandum of December, 1926, which opened a new chapter in relations between Britain and China.

Someone will perhaps still write a different Life of Sir Austen—in half the space.

SALUTE TO BENES

FORTUNE has smiled rarely on Czechoslovakia through these tense days, but it was a happy chance for the Republic's President that on the day of his broadcast to his countrymen¹ Field-Marshal Goering should have chosen to address the Nazi Party at Nuremberg. The opposing evangels have been stated, and the world may judge. It has its choice between the swashbuckler and the states-

¹ September 10th, 1938.

man—and from the point of view of pure entertainment the swash-buckler makes the better reading. “Ridiculous dwarfs of Prague”—from the same mint, obviously, as coined the “contemptible little army” phrase—serves well enough to tickle the ears of the empty-headed. And it undeniably has point. If waist-measurement is the criterion of greatness, Dr. Benes, who hardly exceeds the Goebbels standard in girth or stature, must yield the palm and quit the field. Yet suppose it were true that “the mind’s the standard of the man”? In that field comparison would be cruelty.

The fortuitously simultaneous speeches have this in common, that each was characteristic of its author. That in itself is sufficient reason for making no further reference to one of them; and reason no less sufficient for dwelling on the other. Every sentence of Dr. Benes’ wise, moderate, courageous and conciliatory appeal to all sections of his people expressed the qualities that have marked him since those early days when the notable triumvirate of which he was one member, and Masaryk and Stefanik the others, brought the Czechoslovak State to birth in the midst of war. He cannot claim, and never would, the title of “*pater patriae*”; that belongs of uncontested right to one man alone, Thomas Garrigue Masaryk; but the founder’s mantle has been laid on shoulders for which it was inevitably destined. Masaryk’s desire and the people’s will were one. If there could be no other than Masaryk as first President of the Republic there could as certainly be no other than Benes as second.

Benes today bears a weight of responsibility such as never fell on Masaryk. His country is under hourly menace of invasion by a Power containing five times the population of his own—and of his own something like a fifth might make common cause with the invader. Meanwhile that fifth is daily flouting his Government’s authority and fomenting disorders calculated to give colourable excuse for intervention. Through all this, negotiations vital to the future of the State, negotiations so delicate that a step too few may mean their breakdown and a step too many the sacrifice of the sovereignty by which the State exists, have to be carried through under the muzzle of foreign guns and in face of protests, intelligible and natural, from the Czechs who form the backbone of the State, that too much for equity and too much for safety has already been surrendered.

Those are the problems that every day confront the President as he settles to his desk in that wide room in the Hradschin Castle, with its windows looking out on the cathedral of St. Vitus and down on the towered city and the statued bridges far below. He does not face

them unsupported. He has his Cabinet and he has his Generals. But much of the burden he must necessarily bear alone. Of the three founders of the Czechoslovak State only he survives. No one else has played a part comparable to that assigned to him through its twenty years of life, as Foreign Minister and then as President. On no one would national disaster fall with more crushing weight.

If disaster is averted it will be thanks to Benes first and foremost. He has laboured ceaselessly to weld the diverse races of his country into one, and if he had been left with collaborators like the Prime Minister, Dr. Hodza, and others, to carry through the work, he would have carried it to the point where only a handful of discordant irreconcilables remained. Authoritarian methods might have been for the moment more effective. The very freedom which Czechoslovakia grants to all minorities—of speech, of writing, of religion, of demonstration—makes for disorder if disorderly elements so decide. But if Czechoslovakia were an authoritarian State its President would not be Eduard Benes. For him democracy is not a convention to be assumed or abandoned as expediency dictates. Democracy is part of the fibre and essence of his being. His ideal was not a Czechoslovak State alone, but a State where government of the people by the people for the people should be established and endure.

It is no plausible advocacy of his country's case that Benes has just laid before the world. He was not, for that matter, talking to the world, but direct to his own people. He had to persuade them to accept in the interests of internal peace an agreement that comes near conferring on the Sudeten Germans the right to create a State within the State. He had to cool tempers down when other orators elsewhere grew hoarse inflaming them. But if Benes was not speaking to the world he was speaking in language which half the world, that half where justice and liberty and respect for human personality prevail, understood as if it were its own. These were no doctrines staged for the occasion. They are the gospel Benes has been preaching year after year in the ears of all the nations at Geneva. Co-operation, construction, conciliation—those have been his aims, for the States of Europe and for the peoples within his own State framework. Ten years and more ago, when Britain and France were pulling different ways, his ceaseless warning was, that if peace in Europe was to be preserved they must pull together. Never, either, has his policy been anti-German. In every Czechoslovak plan for economic co-operation in the Danube basin, it has always been recognised that Germany was an essential partner. And he is as much and as little a Bolshevik as Lord Baldwin.

That the Sudeten Germans had certain grievances Benes has never attempted to deny. If he had been a dictator he would have remedied them sooner—except that if he had been a dictator he would have troubled little about remedies. Now the danger is of the remedy being administered too fast. Hardest of all for Benes is the knowledge that he is waging an unreal fight. He has before him the claims of the Sudetendeutsch. They are urging their own case; the British and French Governments are urging him to go to the limit of concession; Lord Runciman is pressing him back and back while the Sudetens move no single inch. And all the time he knows the issue is not the future of the Sudetendeutsch at all; it is a far larger and more fundamental issue, in which they are no more than pawns. While he is striving ceaselessly for peace, forces beside which Czechoslovakia unassisted must be helpless are resolved there shall be no peace except on whatever terms they themselves dictate. And those terms would make Germany the arbiter of Czechoslovakia's fate.

The President in his castle over Prague, wrestling with a problem that could be solved tomorrow if Herr Henlein would contribute a tenth of what Benes has to its solution, is in some respects the loneliest man in Europe—as lonely as Washington and Lincoln sometimes were. Hitler may seem a solitary figure, too, but loneliness is a different thing when you have the big battalions with you. What battalions Benes can count on will be known only when the moment of ultimate crisis comes. Meanwhile if by the extent of his concessions to the Sudetendeutsch he has tried his people hard, he has served them better than they know. For he has convinced a world whose convictions may yet be the deciding factor of the justice of his country's cause. Steadfastness and the resolute refusal to despair still command respect and admiration. A salute to Benes is a salute to gallantry and statesmanship, to liberal thought expressing itself in liberal acts.

LORD LOTHIAN

WHEN I stopped in Shaftesbury Avenue to buy an evening paper, and the vendor told me in a half-hushed voice, "Lord Lothian's dead," the sudden sense of personal and of national loss were inextricably mingled. I had not the privilege of intimate friendship with Philip Kerr, but I had known him well for twenty years and

more—and many whose acquaintance with him was shorter than that realise how much they have to mourn today. It is a strange and tragic caprice of fate that has taken from their tasks in the space of a single year two Scotsmen, both collaborators with Milner in South Africa more than thirty years ago, who were rendering service of incomparable value to their country across the Atlantic. John Buchan and Philip Kerr had much in common, in training, experience, outlook and ideals, especially in their conception of what the British Commonwealth should be. One was born in a frugal manse, the other heir to an ancient title. Both believed profoundly in democracy, but the better democrat of the two was not the son of the manse but the Marquess of Lothian, Earl of Ancrum, Earl of Lothian, Viscount of Brien, Baron Ker of Newbattle and Baron Jedburgh, in the peerage of Scotland.

There is nothing in that derogatory to Buchan's democracy. It is simply that Kerr to a quite abnormal degree saw men as men and cared less than nothing for rank or place. That was part of the secret of his success in the United States. He never wanted to become a peer. If he could he would have remained a commoner. His cousin, whom he succeeded, was of unsound mind, a fact which Kerr found singularly reassuring, because, as he said, such people live long. He was the last man to harp on equalitarian theories, but he made it obvious to anyone he met that he was meeting them on an equal footing. You might agree or disagree with him, you might decide that mixed up with all his ability and depth of conviction there were odd kinks here and there, but you could never be insensible to the deep attraction of a personality in which intellectual distinction, profound earnestness of purpose and an honesty beyond all questioning were remarkably compounded. The memory that remains of the first time I met him, at the door of Mr. Lloyd George's flat in the Rue Nitot in Paris during the Peace Conference, is, like so many later memories, of that characteristic smile of his, which expressed so much—a welcoming friendliness, a general contentment with life, and a certain expectant interest, not without a bare touch of the sardonic, in what you might have to say.

The course of Lord Lothian's career has been fully detailed in the daily Press. His public life began in South Africa in 1904, but it was as Mr. Lloyd George's principal private secretary from 1916 to 1921 that he became generally known at home, though he had in fact been editor of the *Round Table* since 1910; in those years, when the Foreign Office was sidetracked by No. 10, the Prime Minister's critics were liable to maintain that what was best in his policy came

of Kerr's promptings and what was worst of his own. No one, except Lord Hankey, held the key to so many secrets of State during the last two years of the war and the Peace Conference as Kerr. They have never been divulged and they will not be posthumously, for Kerr, as he told me once, never kept a diary or preserved a document. Nor did he ever write a book, apart from one in which he collaborated with his friend Lionel Curtis. But there is one historic piece of authorship to his credit, none the less. In the closing month of the Peace Conference, when the German delegation at Versailles, professedly aghast at the terms of peace that were handed to them, put in a voluminous document embodying their protests and proposals and pleas, a lengthy reply was drafted traversing their contentions point by point. It was a masterly and devastating production, and bore at its foot the signature Clemenceau. But that was the only word of it that the French Prime Minister wrote; the whole of the rest was from the pen of Philip Kerr.

Politically Kerr called himself a Liberal, but he was too much Philip Kerr to accept strict Party limitations or restraints. At the same time he was an Imperialist in the best sense of the term. The society he lived and worked for was the British Commonwealth. He was deeply conscious of the Commonwealth's mission in the world. He sought above all things to see it welded into a living unity and brought into some form of intimate co-operation with the United States. But his hopes took wider scope than that. Long before anything like Federal Union in its present guise was heard of he was preaching some form of world-federation. I fell many pegs in his good opinion (if I had many pegs to fall) when I admitted to him some years ago that I had never read *The Federalist*—a default which I have now corrected, and in which, anyhow, I have since discovered that I had eminent companionship. National sovereignty was to him the root of all evil in the relations between States, and for that reason he soon passed from support of the League of Nations to strong, and sometimes unreasonable, criticism of it. It was a paradoxical attitude, for the Commonwealth in which Kerr so profoundly believed was all the time proving increasingly intolerant of anything resembling a federal tie, the once dependent Dominions clothing themselves progressively and resolutely with all the attributes of the national sovereignty which he thought so fatal.

Those who found a certain incalculable element in Lord Lothian might be inclined to attribute to that his adhesion to Christian Science. Nothing, in fact, in his life was more calculated. I once talked with him at length about it. He had been born and brought

up a Roman Catholic, but when he got to Oxford, from a Catholic school, he decided that whatever was the right religious faith for him it was not the Catholic. Characteristically he threw himself with single-minded earnestness into the quest for a belief he could make his own, travelling extensively to study the great Oriental faiths in their native environment. Strangely or not, he found in Christian Science a complete satisfaction of his needs, and he remained so convinced a Christian Scientist that in his final illness he would not see a medical man. But his religious sympathies were as wide as his religious convictions were deep. No one who had ever talked seriously with him could fail to realise that.

No one who knew Lothian was surprised that he should be a successful Ambassador at Washington, but his success has exceeded all expectations. He has been not merely a good but a great Ambassador, and his brief tenure of office will remain historic. The reasons are clear. Americans mistrust diplomacy and diplomats, and Kerr was nothing of a diplomat in the professional sense. He had no use for finessing. He had no use for propaganda. He dealt in facts and the inescapable inferences from them. He disliked concealing truth and was incapable of manipulating truth. His patent sincerity was his greatest asset. But there were many others. Americans are genuine democrats, but with an equally genuine weakness for the hereditary aristocracy for which they have no place in their own society. They like public speeches, and Kerr was an excellent speaker. And he knew America better than most Americans. He was familiar with its history at every period. He understood all the implications of its Constitution. And thousands of the most important Americans knew him. As Secretary of the Rhodes Trust for years he had visited the United States almost annually, exchanging views with politicians of all camps, and particularly with those college heads and professors who carry so much more weight in the United States than college heads and professors do here.

There could be no better preparation for the service Kerr was to render in the last twenty months of his all too short life. To it he owed that astonishing sureness of touch with American opinion. No public can be more critical than the American. None is more suspicious of anything like propaganda. Kerr seemed to know at every moment just how far he could safely go in a public utterance, and he went all that way, but never farther; never, therefore, too far. His last speech, which he was too ill to deliver in person, went farthest of all. He stated Britain's needs and pointed to America's duty in the uncompromising language which he habitually used. No

British Ambassador to the United States had ever spoken so, but the speech won universal approval—and that before knowledge of the gravity of the Ambassador's illness could have its effect in ensuring a sympathetic reception. The speaker's death has given the speech a dramatic significance. To that extent it may be said that he was *felix opportunitate mortis*. But in reality there is cold comfort there. With Kerr's own stern sincerity we must recognise the greatness of our loss. The sense of what the opportunities of his next ten years of life might have been precludes the solace which contemplation of a career fitly rounded off and a great task accomplished can bring.

LORD ROBERT

THIS volume ¹ is sub-titled, with distressing mendacity, "an autobiography." Would that it were that. Actually it consists of 46 really autobiographical pages, called "introductory," followed by 300 on the League of Nations, with a certain autobiographical thread running through them. The value of this is, of course, not to be depreciated. Lord Cecil writes with unique authority on the League of Nations. But the very recognition he has won as leader in that great crusade makes his followers and admirers much more eager than he realises to hear about his personal life and the evolution of his political ideas, particularly in the international sphere. Lord Cecil may not, of course, feel called on to tell the public all they want to know, but as a rule he is benevolently disposed towards such exigences; the truth is, I fancy, that he has not quite appreciated what they do want to know. The use of the word "autobiography" whets appetite. Lord Cecil has had an abnormally interesting career. Growing up in one of the great ruling families of England, he entered public life as a strait and orthodox Conservative, to move steadily leftward till he probably feels more sympathy today with the Labour Party than any other. He held Cabinet office during some of the most critical years of the century, and he has made more numerous and closer contacts with the leading statesmen of other nations than perhaps any other living Englishman. There is an inexhaustible mine of invaluable reminiscence here, and it would be lamentable if the ore remained unworked. This volume, so far from closing the door to a full-length auto-

¹ *A Great Experiment*, by Viscount Cecil (Cape, 16s.).

biography proper, only demonstrates the clamant need for it. Lord Cecil's father, Lord Salisbury; his cousin, Arthur Balfour; the liberalisation of Lord Robert; the House of Commons before 1914; the writer's own deep and strong religious faith; half a century of the Church of England (or religion in Britain generally)—these I suggest as half a dozen out of the score or so of themes which Lord Cecil could, and I trust will, some day treat from a purely personal and autobiographical standpoint.

Lord Cecil may reply that it is unreasonable to criticise his present book for not being what he never intended it to be. But I am far from criticising—only appealing to him to give us, in addition to this, the full picture of which we get here only tantalising glimpses. Lord Cecil, for example, mentions (in seven lines) that in 1878 his mother took him to Berlin during the famous Congress at which his father was British delegate; he must while there have heard something worth repeating about a man called Bismarck. And of his presentation to the Mikado at Tokyo in 1905 I find it hard to think there is nothing to be said but "an uninteresting interview, the most noticeable thing being that the Mikado's clothes fitted even worse than my own, the explanation given me being that his person was so sacred that he could not be measured." But for better or worse what Lord Cecil set out to write about is not so much himself as the League of Nations, to which he has given so long, so ardent and so honourable a service. Here a distinction must be drawn between the story of the League's twenty years, which has been told before by a score of competent writers, and Lord Cecil's comments and criticisms, which must always command unstinted respect even when they do not command unqualified agreement—though personally I quarrel with none of them. Roughly speaking, Lord Cecil attributes the failure of the League to prevent war (in many cases, of course, it has prevented war) to the initial mistake of excluding Germany from original membership and the subsequent lukewarmness of the Governments of Great Britain (except when Arthur Henderson, "the most successful Foreign Minister we have had since 1918," was Foreign Secretary) and France. In the case of France there were times when a stronger adjective than lukewarm would be appropriate.

The gravamen of Lord Cecil's charge against successive British Governments is that, ready as they were to pay lip-service to the doctrine that the greatest of British interests is peace, they were never (till 1940, when it was too late) ready to pay the price of peace, which means being prepared to use force to resist aggression even

if it is not aggression against Britain. He cites, of course, particularly, the Manchurian affair in 1931 and the attack on Abyssinia in 1935, pointing out with some force that while in 1931 we could do nothing when China was attacked, immediate naval and military action was taken—effectively—when Japan threatened British interests at Shanghai in 1932; and that the reluctance to sever trade relations with Japan then had an instructive sequel in the prompt severance of such relations with Russia when British engineers in that country were arrested and put on trial in 1933. More generally the suggestion is that the rooted British (or British Government's) objection to contracting binding commitments is the root cause of the present trouble, for doubt whether Britain would move against an aggressor at any rate encourages aggression much more than the conviction that Britain would.

In this connexion one disclosure is particularly pertinent. In May, 1933, when various eminent British publicists were pursuing a policy of cultivating Hitler, Dr. Benes told Lord Cecil that "Hitler's foreign policy was to absorb Austria and Czechoslovakia, to create an independent Ukraine as a counterpoise to Russia and Poland, to suppress the Danzig Corridor and reduce Poland to subservience." Events supply sufficient comment. One personal judgement may be added. "I remember a conversation at the end of January (1936) with Mr. Winston Churchill in which he delighted me by praising the Peace Ballot and warmly supporting a policy of rearmament and the League," writes Lord Cecil, adding in his next sentence that in a debate in the House of Lords three weeks later the doctrine found general approval among Conservatives that it was "not an immediate and direct interest of the British Empire" that "aggression should not be allowed to succeed." On that Lord Cecil comments, "It was because Mr. Neville Chamberlain came to accept this view that we are now again plunged into European war." Three observations based on the author's great experience of Geneva are worth recording; one is that "frequently agreement has been reached under pressure of publicity that could not have been reached otherwise"; a second that no serious doubt as to who was the aggressor in a given case has ever arisen; and the third that the unanimity rule has rarely given rise to serious difficulty.

What, in the light of the past, is Lord Cecil's hope for the future? He is no blind defender of the League as it is. On the contrary, he has constantly proposed changes and reforms. But of two things he is convinced, that only an institution with potential force behind it can effectively check aggression, and that such an institution must

for purposes of the prevention of war be organised, at any rate in the case of Europe, on a continental scale. He therefore advocates the continuance of the economic, humanitarian and other non-political activities of the League on a world-scale, as proposed by the Bruce Committee, and the creation within the League of a European confederation (*not* federation) for mutual defence. In spite of the difficulty of delimiting Europe for such a purpose this seems a more hopeful line of development than any other. Lord Cecil's opinion, at any rate, is based on a unique experience of international affairs. For that reason alone his book is a contribution of the highest importance to contemporary thought, for it raises on every page challenging issues on which some decision must in the near future be taken. As for Lord Cecil himself, he is one of the great figures of our time. He has a remarkable faculty for inspiring admiration and devotion in his friends, and deserving it. To them, I suggest again, he owes it to treat this book as a first instalment, and give them, and the world, as a second those personal memories to which they may claim to be justly entitled.

JOHN BURNS

JOHN BURNS died last Sunday.¹ He had been politically dead, by his own choice, since 1914, when he resigned, together with the other "Honest John"—Morley—on the outbreak of war. From that moment Burns relapsed into silence so far as any utterance on current politics was concerned. He never made a statement about his resignation. No one ever knew precisely what his reasons were. He was emphatically opposed to the war—that much he said unequivocally in his brief letter of resignation—and in particular against alliance with France. But I am quite certain that on that August day in 1914 he never believed for a moment that he was setting the seal to his own political career. I remember talking to him at the corner of Victoria Street some time early in 1915, and as we parted he declared with emphasis, "I tell you, 'Arris, before long all Europe will be calling for John Burns." He saw himself, I imagine, as the man to end by a negotiated peace a conflict that he detested. It must have been in the same year that, when my wife and I went down to see his books at his house on Clapham Common, he took a similar impressive leave, with the assurance, "Madam, you are shaking 'ands

¹ January 24th, 1943.

with a man who has the greatest part of his career in front of him."

It was not so; and it was odd that even Burns, with that wholly engaging vanity of his, should have thought it could be. He had great qualities, but not the qualities a man must have to fill that rôle. He had not the power to lead his fellow-countrymen, let alone foreigners, for his period of office had done more to lose him friends than to win them. His appointment to the Local Government Board by Campbell-Bannerman in 1906 kindled high hopes. Here was the first working-man to enter a British Cabinet—for though Henry Broadhurst had risen, as he put it, "from stone-mason's bench to Treasury Bench," it was as an Under-Secretary, not a Cabinet Minister—and he was to head a department concerned intimately with the life of the people. But Burns dropped from the first into the hands of his officials, and they were anything but a progressive set. Charles Masterman was there, it is true, as Parliamentary Secretary—Masterman with the 'heart of gold and the 'head of feathers, Masterman of whom his chief observed airily when questioned about some matter of water-supply, "Oh, you must see my curate about that; 'e looks after the baptisms"—but for the 'head of feathers the L.G.B. under J. B. was no bed of feathers, and though the partnership was personally pleasant enough, politically its termination was a blessed release to the curate.

But whatever may be said or thought of John Burns the politician, no one but can count himself fortunate who knew John Burns the man. He loved talking, primarily about himself, and there could be no more entertaining topic. Whoever has been chosen, if anyone already has, to write his Life will find a wealth of material waiting for him. Burns kept a record of everything. "There it begins," he said to me as he showed me the filing cabinets full of cuttings and dockets, "with the first ticket I had as a boiler-maker's apprentice at 14." (He became an engineer later, a member of the old Amalgamated Society of Engineers, and was paying his dues to the present Amalgamated Engineers' Union till a few years ago.) And "'ere are my proudest possessions," he would say, pulling open a wardrobe and displaying the old straw hat he wore through the dock strike (with Cardinal Manning and Ben Tillett, who has died this week too, and Tom Mann as his allies) in 1889; a walking-stick given him by King Edward VII; and the doctor's cap and gown in which he took, I think, an honorary LL.D. degree at Glasgow.

As a raconteur, Burns was incomparable. He talked freely about people he did and people he did not like. Among the latter, I fancy,

were most of his Cabinet colleagues. Mr. Lloyd George he did not love; both stars had swum into the firmament at the same time, and it rather looked as if the star in the west might be the brighter. To Asquith and Haldane and Grey he ascribed an undue consciousness of academic superiority. Morley, for some reason, perhaps because of his radicalism, escaped that reproach. For C.-B. and for the present Prime Minister, another Cabinet colleague, he felt considerably more warmth, in spite of one visit he paid to the Home Office during the railway strike of 1911, when he found an exhilarated Home Secretary with a large map on which he was moving about Guards and other military reserves. "I told 'im," said Burns caustically, "that 'e was mistaking a parish-pump squabble for the social revolution." That didn't worry Winston. He was moving soldiers about.

Burns the man was infinitely entertaining. His supreme, if not his single, interest in life in the last thirty years was his library. His collections on London, and on Sir Thomas More in particular, were extensive and valuable. He had been picking things up in the Charing Cross Road and Marylebone High Street for half a century, and in quarters less exalted before that. "Out of the first money I ever earned," he said, "I bought a copy of *Utopia* for 2d. off (somebody or other's) barrow in New Cut. And now, if you ever come and see my books, as I hope you will, you'll see the great first folio edition of More, and there's just room on top of it for the poor London boy's first purchase; and the first purchase was the better value." He could recite Milton interminably and he knew Shakespeare from end to end, and would argue any detail of any play. One example of that is worth recalling. Burns had a fondness for the army manœuvres. Year after year he would follow them on Salisbury Plain on a push-bicycle, and both as John Burns and as a Cabinet Minister he was always a welcome guest at officers' messes. One night at a mess dinner a controversy arose about the name of Henry IV's charger. Burns proposed that they should get a Shakespeare and settle it, to which the obvious answer was made that a Shakespeare unfortunately was not part of the standard equipment of officers on manœuvres. "No," said Burns, "but here you are in an English village; and wherever there's an English village there's an English vicarage, and wherever there's an English vicarage there's a copy of Shakespeare." So out Cabinet Minister and two or three subalterns sallied in search of the vicar. He turned out to be away and the vicarage locked up; the schoolmaster had the key; the schoolmaster had gone to bed, but he was duly roused out of it,

the vicarage was entered, the volume discovered and the name of the steed finally established as Barbary.

There is another story of Burns in a manœuvres mess that deserves to be told, but not on the morrow of the celebration of a great Welshman's birthday. A memory that must serve as inadequate substitute illustrates Burns' faculty for seizing on the humorous in everything. I found him one day years ago in the smoking-room of the National Liberal Club bursting for someone to share a joke with. It was the custom there (and very likely is still) for pages to cry round the club the names of members wanted on the telephone or by a caller. "Two of those boys have just gone through here," Burns said, "one calling Mr. 'Itchings, Mr. 'Itchings, and the other Mr. Keating, Mr. Keating."

Burns was a great Londoner; his description of the Thames as "liquid history" has long been classic. He knew the capital through and through, and loved it. First and foremost, of course, he was Battersea. The destruction and desolation of today would have been anguish to him, even if he had not suffered from it personally. And he cannot be denied the title of a great man. No man who had travelled such a road and reached such a goal could lack greatness. And his very weaknesses tended to be attractive. When in the Cabinet he, of course, took his turn as Minister in Attendance. King George V, to whom Burns' qualities were well calculated to appeal, thought it worth while to consult him once, as a man of the people, about the wisdom of taking action in the Courts (as he eventually did) against the authors of the rumours that he, the King, had been married in Malta prior to his marriage to Queen Mary. "Don't do it, Sir," counselled the Minister in Attendance emphatically. "Take no notice of them. Why, if I was to tell you the things people say about *me*." So, at least, the story goes, and I believe it to be true.

Burns' biographer, as I have said, will be a fortunate man. It is to be hoped he will be equal to a great opportunity.

MR. WELLS' GOSPELS

I

A PRESIDENTIAL address by Mr. H. G. Wells to the Educational Section of the British Association is something of an event. Mr. Wells last year frequented the meetings of the Association as a

private citizen, whereon the Association, prompt to profit by its opportunities, laid insistent hands on him, and with admirable judgement made him president of Section L, Educational Science, in 1937. With admirable judgement, because education is a subject on which Mr. Wells has long held, and frequently expresses, decided views. You can find them in his *Joan and Peter*, you can find them in his *Experiment in Autobiography*, you can find them in his memoir of Sanderson of Oundle, you come on them in some shape or form in almost every one of the volumes that have flowed from that prolific pen.

If discussion of education in its narrower form means deciding both what to put into children's heads and how to put it there, Mr. Wells will be heard with respect on both problems, but with rather more on the first than the second. Not that he is without experience of the art of teaching—readers of his autobiography have no need to be reminded of that—but he spent less time inflicting education than in suffering it, and less time at both pursuits than most of his British Association audience. But he has, of course, been teaching and learning with unflagging ardour all his life.

Nothing could be of more general interest than his theme, for it concerns every citizen of these islands—for that matter, every citizen of every civilised country in the world. It is simply this: the irreducible minimum of hard fact that every boy and girl ought to know at fifteen after ten years of school (or as Mr. Wells puts it, "the information content of education")—the facts of history, of geography, of biology, of physiology, quite apart from accomplishments like learning languages and learning music and learning drawing and learning mathematics.

What, in short, Mr. Wells sets out to discover, is "the irreducible minimum of knowledge for a responsible human being today?" The answer that suggests itself to that is that there is no such thing, but the question serves well enough as starting-point. Mr. Wells is moderate in his demands on the time-table. He hopes to get for his factual education no more than six hours a week for forty weeks in the year for ten years—2400 hours in all, and he told the British Association how those 2400 hours should be used. He professed an intention to be provocative, which is all to the good. But one thing is worth remembering; it is possible to be revolutionary and right, and possible also to be revolutionary and wrong. I doubt whether Mr. Wells' hearers at Nottingham thought him quite as revolutionary as he expected, but they pretty certainly thought him both right and wrong.

He is right incontestably in his fundamental insistence on the need for scrapping tradition and routine and deciding *de novo* what in the light of the needs of citizenship today a child leaving school at fifteen should be taught in the way of actual fact in the ten years of his school life. (Mr. Wells, both in his address and in the very instructive diagram with which he accompanied it, carried the question on into the higher grades of education, but his principal subject, the first ten years, will be more than sufficient for discussion here.) The question of how you begin is all-important, and we must come back to it, but the simplest way to grasp the content of Mr. Wells' programme is to show what the children educated on his system will have learned by the last stage of their decade of schooling. They will know the outline of general history, including the rise and fall of the great empires of the past, the appearance of the modern sovereign States, and the elementary history of Great Britain and France; they will know geography, not as a list of capes and rivers and capitals and mountains, but as the description of a world in which human beings live and things grow, and linked up with that they will know at least the elements of geology; they will have been carried a certain distance in physics and chemistry and know something of the elementary history of invention and discovery; and concurrently with that there will have been laid the foundations of sound knowledge in biology, physiology and anatomy.

Within the field he has specifically delimited—the field of factual knowledge—Mr. Wells, it seems to me, has provided for as rounded and balanced a curriculum as could well be devised. I wish my own education had covered half the ground he stakes out; the old barrier between classical and modern was as impenetrable as a quick-set hedge. How far it is practicable to carry the average boy or girl to the point Mr. Wells means them to reach in the 2400 hours he gives them in ten years is a matter for teachers themselves to argue about. But it obviously depends very largely on how they are taught, and on that point Mr. Wells, whether consciously or not, is provocative up to the full limit of his desires. Much of his paper is devoted to the teaching of history, and very admirable nearly everything he says on that subject is, particularly his denunciation both of ultra-Imperialism, “how *we* won, how *our* Empire grew,” and so forth, and of “the furtive anti-patriotism of the leftish teacher.” And to keep national history in proportion by approaching it through world history is on the face of it desirable on every ground.

But can you do that? Mr. Wells has no doubts about the method. “We begin,” he says, “telling true stories of the past and of other

lands," disregard for the moment dates and dynasties, leave battles and the matrimonial and extra-matrimonial excesses of sovereigns alone, profit by the light the discoveries of archaeologists throw on the history of the past, and "*when at last* (italics mine) we focus our attention on the British Isles and France we shall have the affairs of these regions in a proper proportion to the rest of the human adventure." Well, shall we? Or will the child's historical ideas be a general blur? I should like to hear the verdict of history-teachers on Mr. Wells' method. It may be that the developing child-mind finds a natural affinity with the childhood of the race, but I was brought up on an old sound rule (for I, like Mr. Wells, taught school once) that you should proceed as far as possible from the known to the unknown. The child's own country is more real to him than *orbis terrarum*; he can be interested more easily in the history of England than in the history of Chaldaea. Mr. Wells himself recognises that in another field. "Local topography," he says, and obviously he is right, "can form the basis of geography." If the right method there is to work from the near to the remote, from the familiar to the unfamiliar, is the opposite method right in the case of history? Mr. Wells raises a fundamental question here.

At one other point he mingles with a mass of stimulating suggestion a challenge that will certainly not be ignored. Children, in his view, are taught far too much about "the little region of Palestine." "All the historical past of the Bible abounds in wild exaggeration of the importance of this little strip of land." I wonder. What are values? Do children learn too much about the little region of Greece? A day or two before Mr. Wells delivered his address I happened to be reading his tribute to Sanderson of Oundle, "beyond question the greatest man I ever knew with any degree of intimacy," as Wells called him. In 1932 Sanderson gave an address to the National Union of Scientific Workers, with Mr. Wells in the chair, and at the end of it fell back dead. I marked one passage in that address as it is reproduced in Mr. Wells' book:

"... One of the greatest tragedies scientific men have allowed is for others to steal the Bible from them. The Old and New Testaments, with their record of progressive revelation, form the most scientific book ever seen. Yet scientific men have allowed a certain type of man to steal it from them."

Nothing, says Mr. Wells, began in Palestine, nothing was worked out there. Nothing, I suggest, began there but a particular people's search for God; nothing was worked out there but the discovery.

Perhaps that belongs to the realm of metaphysics, not of fact. But Sanderson's valuation of the record of progressive revelation in the volume that Mr. Wells thinks over-studied is itself a challenge to Mr. Wells. He may not endorse his friend's views, but he certainly will not deny them full respect. The rest of us are free to choose.

II

The world, Heaven knows, has need enough of physicians, and Mr. Wells' services are fortunately always available. The gulf between *New Worlds for Old* and the present *The New World Order*¹ covers thirty-one years, and they have been amply filled with prescriptions, instructions and confessions of faith. And as Mr. Wells is still only some thirteen years older than the old men whose senility at sixty (following on ossification at fifty) he so rightly exposes in this and other volumes, we may hope for a considerable accession to the output yet. How much is the world the better for it all? The question is hard to answer quantitatively, but I think the world is better. *New Worlds for Old* and *First and Last Things* (one of the confessions of faith), and some of the earlier novels, gave stimulus and guidance to a generation for which social reform was being made a reality by the 1906 Liberal Government as never before. Verging on senility though that generation may be now, it can fittingly occupy its last lucid moments in recording its debt to Mr. Wells.

But while Mr. Wells has stayed young as he watched others growing old, he has not altogether mellowed. The world has been too deaf to the gospel, the patient too inured to the prescriptions. The "defenders of all the dogmatic religions" (they range from Marxists to Roman Catholics) have taken no notice. "Never once has there been an attempt to answer the plain things I have been saying about them for a third of a century." Why is that, if it is so? This book seems to me to supply one reason. A man's ideas about a new and still invisible world-order can and should be checked by his ideas about the existing world-order which everyone can see. If he takes a sane and sober view of that his views about the future will command respect, whether they command agreement or not. Now what has Mr. Wells to say about things as they are? Again and again his views appear to me, I will not say perverse, for that simply raises questions of opinion, but divorced from fact. He arraigns papers and publishers for their timidity about giving currency to "bold, unorthodox views," and complains that "publishers publish for

¹ *The New World Order*, by H. G. Wells (Secker & W.

nothing but safe profits." It hardly seems surprising if they do, but in fact the best publishers are deliberately taking risks every day. As for the papers, in what belligerent country in this war or the last have papers been freer than British newspapers are today? Mr. Wells says the League of Nations "was devised by an ex-professor of the old-fashioned history assisted by a few politicians." Actually it was devised mainly by a British Foreign Office Committee, presided over by a High Court Judge. He says "it ignored the vast disorganisation of human life by technical revolutions, big business and modern finance that was going on, of which the Great War itself was scarcely more than a by-product." Actually it was the position given to the Financial and Economic sections of the League, and the International Labour Office, that has enabled those organs to survive and expand while the political activities of the League are in temporary abeyance.

Mr. Wells affirms that "this astonishing bunch of rulers [the British Cabinet] has never revealed any conception whatever of a common future before its sprawling Empire. There was a time when that Empire seemed likely to become the nexus of a world system, but now manifestly it has no future but disintegration." He adds that the British Empire "is rapidly becoming the most backward political organisation in the world. But sooner or later it will have no more money for the dole and no more allies to abandon nor dominions to yield up to their local bosses, and then possibly its disintegration will be complete (R.I.P.)." It would take too long to explain why I believe that that is a completely false picture of the British Empire, or why I believe Mr. Wells completely wrong in thinking that "the British crowd is already a sullen crowd. The world has not seen it in such a bad temper for a century and a half, and, let there be no mistake, it is far less in a temper with the Germans than it is with its own rulers." This, with great respect to Mr. Wells, seems to me sheer nonsense. I think he is just as much at sea in suggesting that "most people in the British Isles are heartily sick of Mr. Chamberlain and his Government." Here one opinion is as good as another, and Mr. Wells' very likely better than mine, but I note (for what it may be worth) that that interrogative and statistical body, the British Institute of Public Opinion, has decided after investigation that the Prime Minister's hold on the country has substantially strengthened since war broke out (his policy being approved by 55 per cent. of the country in August, 1939, by 64 per cent. in December).

If I saw the world as Mr. Wells sees it I should no doubt feel a

revolution to be as urgent, and want it to be as drastic, as Mr. Wells does. Even so, I find it difficult to see exactly what shape his revolution is to assume. It is to be based on a collectivisation of the world through the acceptance, by all countries associated with the World Pax, of a ten-article Declaration of the Rights of Man, which Mr. Wells recently formulated in a letter to *The Times*. It is a comprehensive and highly interesting document, and as a statement of aims deserves to stimulate not only study, but what Mr. Wells very properly presses for at the beginning of his book, "a great debate." Out of that the next step may emerge, and it clearly must be a step in the direction of further collectivisation and some effective international organisation. That gradualness Mr. Wells at one point assumes—"there will be no day of days when a new world-order comes into being. Step by step and here and there it will arrive," though elsewhere, and much earlier, he lays it down that "it is the system of nationalist individualism and unco-ordinated enterprise that is the world's disease, and it is the whole system that has to go. It has to be reconditioned down to its foundations or replaced." Can that be achieved step by step? The realisation of Mr. Wells' Declaration of the Rights of Man, at any rate, hardly can. Mr. Wells is analytic (not always convincingly, as I have tried to show), suggestive, as he always is, but not conspicuously constructive. Still he has supplied ample material for "the great debate" and that is a service worth rendering.

A GREAT JOURNALIST

SOME twenty or more years ago—it must indeed be all thirty years—*Punch* depicted very admirably the case of the agitated Liberal turning over the morning papers in his club smoking-room, learning from *The Times* that under the leaders he venerated the prestige of the country was at a lower level abroad than it had been for a generation, from *The Daily Telegraph* that Mr. Lloyd George's land taxation proposals were plain and monstrous confiscation, from *The Morning Post* that duchesses would never consent to lick insurance stamps, and saved only from a rapidly impending apoplexy by the opportune arrival of the green *Westminster*, with Mr. J. A. Spender's leading article spread in dignified wide columns over its front page. Straightway everything was changed. "The elements' rage, the fiend-voices that raved," dwindled, subsided, became a peace after pain.

Reason held sway; calm logic prevailed; Liberal doctrine stood vindicated. A land whose destinies were controlled by Liberal Ministers was seen once more to be the only land fit for Liberals (or indeed other and less enlightened mortals) to live in.

Today Mr. Spender plays the same indispensable rôle. But today it is against the terrors of thunder on the Left, not the Right, that he comes to reassure us. Thanks largely to men like Mr. Spender himself Conservatism in Great Britain has become Liberalised, and Liberal veterans, standing themselves where they always stood, see the House of Commons dominated by serried rows of silent Tories, and sections of the public Press by youthful and highly vocal Marxists. The latter seem for the moment to be the more in need of the correctives which the pen that indited the *Westminster* leaders forty years ago can administer still with undiminished vigour, clarity and conciseness. In his new volume,¹ in which fresh material and earlier articles, making welcome re-emergence from files in which they have too long lain buried, form a congenial and well-proportioned companionship, Mr. Spender has a tilt at all of them—the “modern” poets, the smart reviewers, the impassioned Marxians, who comprise the new intelligentsia of the Left. Perhaps, after all, tilt is hardly the expression, for Mr. Spender equips himself with no weapon so aggressive as a lance. He is the *vir pietate gravis*, and *sapientia* not less than *pietate*, who gazes with benevolent perplexity on antics and poses unknown to the more practical generation of which he is so distinguished a representative. Poetry? But that was what Keats and Shelley and Homer wrote. How can the same word cover the unintelligible prose chopped into lines of differing length that figures in columns headed Poetry today? And then painting. Titian, Rubens, Rembrandt painted. At least so it was thought. But if this post-Picasso genre is painting, then what Titian did was clearly something else. And Mr. Spender, in a *cri de cœur* with which I for one associate myself to the full, appeals for a new terminology that shall serve to distinguish such bewildering incompatibles.

But that, in a sense, is by the way, though the theme runs through essay after essay on diverse subjects. Given capitalism, what outcome but war was possible? So runs one of the rhetorical questions of the post-war scribes. Mr. Spender happens, unlike many of them, to have lived long enough before the war to watch it coming, and long enough after it to study all the official documents, British, German, Austrian, French, in which its hidden springs are revealed, and the legend that it was capitalism that plunged the world in

¹ *Men and Things*, by J. A. Spender (Cassell, 10s. 6d.).

carnage gets short shrift at his hands. The origins of the war were many and complex. The latest date at which the study of them can begin is 1871. To present them concisely is a manifest virtue, but to over-simplify or over-abbreviate may be fatally misleading. It may well be doubted whether the subject could be treated more accurately, more adequately, with juster balance and with truer proportion than it is in the twenty-two pages of this volume occupied by the lecture the author delivered on it in 1936 to Modern Greats men at Oxford. There could be no better introduction to that larger survey of the field which Mr. Spender himself gave us four years ago in his *Fifty Years of Europe*.

Mr. Spender, of course, is a convinced defender of Lord Grey's diplomacy. The first section of this volume is devoted to a gallery of portraits, in which Grey of Falldon holds the foremost place, this particular sketch being obviously, indeed avowedly, written to recall the image of Grey the greatest of modern Foreign Ministers to any who, under the influence of Professor Trevelyan's admirable biography, may have fixed their eyes too exclusively on Grey the man. Where I find so little opportunity of differing from Mr. Spender I must make the most of what there is. Grey is quoted as having admitted that he was wrong in thinking Germany could control Austria, whereas it became clear later that she was being driven by Austria, and Mr. Spender seems rather to agree with him. But was she ever driven by Austria? She deliberately gave Austria her head, and though the Kaiser did give one alarmed and fitful tug at the reins it is hard to think of a moment when Germany could be described as *driven* by her subsidiary partner.

Then, of course, there is the vexed question of the military conversations with France. Grey has, to my mind, in his *Twenty-Five Years*, fully vindicated his action in sanctioning their continuance when he took office in December 1905, but Mr. Spender goes further than Grey himself in claiming that now that all the records are available "there is no trace in them of any material fact which was withheld from Cabinet or country," and (elsewhere) that "no one ever suggested that the Cabinet, if consulted, would, or could, have given a different answer than that which was given by the four Ministers" (the four who were cognisant of the conversations at the time—Campbell-Bannerman, Grey, Haldane and Asquith). The conversations themselves can hardly be regarded as other than a material fact, and they were certainly kept from the country from 1905 to 1914. As to the Cabinet, both Morley and Loreburn were members of it. Can it be assumed that they would have acquiesced

in the military conversations? I find it hard, in view of subsequent events, to think so.

But these are points on which, though I suggest that Mr. Spender may be wrong, I admit that he may well be right. In dwelling on them I have deprived myself of space which might perhaps have been devoted more usefully to other features of this varied and absorbing volume—the portraits of Lord Knollys and Lord Esher and Sir Alfred Keogh, the travel sketches, the brilliant parody of G. K. C., the single page (and that not filled) paying to the Unknown Warrior a tribute almost ideally fit. Part of the book is journalism, and it serves to show that between the best journalism and literature there is no dividing line. The rest of it is literature incontestable, and all of it charged with that faith and sanity, that undaunted hope and unfailing competence, that has made its author a recognised touchstone by which lesser members of his profession may fitly test their standards and their aspirations.

* * * *

By J. A. Spender's death ¹ this country loses its greatest journalist; nor can I think of any other country that can produce a greater. That judgement may be open to challenge. Most judgements are. But I have held it much too long to abandon it now that he has gone.

In a sense, of course, Alfred Spender belonged to an earlier generation, though he was writing to within a fortnight of his death, partly because writing was in his blood and he had always things to say worth saying, partly to distract his mind from the racking pain that had been torturing his body in these last years. These years, these last two decades, have been the period of Spender the author, and the biographies of Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith, *The Public Life* and *Life*, *Journalism and Politics* have been among their harvest. But greater in relation to journalism than the last phase in relation to authorship were the years of the old green *Westminster*, which, except for a brief initial period under E. T. Cook, Spender edited from its birth in 1893 to its lamented death thirty years later. In the ten years before the last war the *Westminster*, with Spender in command, F. C. Gould as cartoonist and Charles Geake as the writer of its admirably terse and pungent Notes, touched its high-water mark. In spite of its almost incredibly small circulation its influence was remarkable.

What were the qualities that made Spender a great journalist? They were many, and all essential elements in his equipment. To a

¹ On June 21st, 1942.

rich background of culture, acquired at Balliol under Jowett, with Cosmo Lang, Grey and Curzon among his contemporaries, was added wide knowledge of men and affairs, the command of a clear and unpretentious prose style, sound judgement tempered, when tempered at all, by charity, scrupulous fairness in assessments of friends and enemies, and immovable adhesion to the highest standards of his profession. In brief, it was character welded to intellect. He would, I think, not have accepted C. P. Scott's famous "Comment is free, facts are sacred," without one reserve. Comment is free only within limits. It must be based on certain principles. No commentator is free to be consciously unjust to a man or a party or a country, even an enemy country. Truth must be the controlling factor.

It was Spender's personal integrity that has always impressed me most. Not only was he incapable of anything petty or "smart," it was utterly impossible to imagine a connexion between him and such things. There was no one to whom younger journalists would turn more instinctively for advice on any professional or personal question, and none of them ever appealed to his wisdom and sympathy in vain. I was once, if I may quote an example, approached by a representative of a foreign Government and asked if I would go to the other end of Europe, study a certain controversial question on the spot and write a book on it. I said at once that it would interest me, but that it would obviously not be a commercial proposition, and equally obviously I could not go at the expense of the Government in question to write on a dispute in which it was directly concerned. My scruples seemed to cause some surprise, and the idea crossed my mind that the difficulty might be solved by the Government in question inviting a reputable publisher to get a book written on the desired subject on terms which were no business of mine, with the suggestion that I might perhaps be asked to write it, on terms to be settled between the publisher and me. I put that to Spender. "No," he said decisively. "If you didn't know the Government was behind the publisher it would be all right. But as things are you can't do it." Such were his standards, and of course he was right. Never were fixed standards more needed than today, in journalism and many other professions. Never did journalist more religiously maintain the highest standards than Spender.

In the days of the Liberal Governments of 1906-15 Spender exerted more political influence than any other journalist of any Party, for he was the only one whom Mr. Asquith, too exclusive in his relations with the Press, habitually consulted and received at all

times at Downing Street. Grey, moreover, his contemporary at Balliol, was at the Foreign Office, and Haldane, whom he knew well, at the War Office. In other ways he was able to mould policy, for he sat on three Royal Commissions—on Divorce, on Egypt and on the Private Manufacture of Armaments. He had travelled in India. He many times visited Germany, and had some embarrassing interchanges with the Kaiser, who would ask him point-blank such questions as, "Why don't some of your Ministers come here and see me, Mr. Spender? Why doesn't Grey come?" He was said to have been invited to go to Washington as Ambassador; that, at any rate, was seriously discussed.

That Spender was incapable of adapting himself to the demands and standards of mass-production journalism may be counted a defect—or a virtue. His closing days were not his happiest, for the *Westminster* was gone, and there was no pulpit open to him comparable to the pulpit he had built himself. But one felt that Spender was always far greater than such externals. He went on writing; what is equally important, he went on reading; he enjoyed the countryside he lived in; till he was too ill he came to the Reform Club regularly and met his friends. Always, through his pen and his personality, he gave much to other people's lives. Always, in divers ways, he got much himself from life. He was made a Companion of Honour in 1937. A companion of honour he had been all his working days.

Let me add this. The injunction *de mortuis nil nisi bonum* often covers an appreciation going far beyond the warrant of the facts. I have written nothing here that I have not frequently said of Alfred Spender while he lived.

A GOOD JOURNALIST

It may well be that this selection from Francis Perrot's writings¹ will have no extensive sale. It deserves it, but only a few people, probably, will discover that it deserves it. Fugitive pieces spanning in all a period of five and twenty years, and ending ten years ago, can seem to have no more than at best a transient interest for the world of 1938. Natural as that conclusion is, it happens both on the short view and the long view to be wrong. Surprisingly, the book

¹ *Reporter: being extracts from the writings of Francis Perrot* (Hutchinson, 10s. 6d.).

does hold attention. It holds it like Noel Coward's *Cavalcade*, and for the same reason. Those of us who were within half a dozen years one way or the other of Perrot's age—he was born in 1878—can remember everything he writes of, and those whose memories go less far back will realise inevitably how authentic a picture of this past event or that they are being given. For what this book contains is not merely good journalism, but superlatively good.

That is the short, the immediate view. Take what Perrot called, or some sub-editor called for him, "An Epic of the North Sea," the description of the surrender of the German Fleet to the British Grand Fleet in 1918. You could not read the first ten lines of that and stop. For here is a great event treated in language worthy of its greatness, as no one when he gets to the end of it can question. Or the four Derbys which Perrot saw between 1921 and 1928. Like the great majority of His Majesty's subjects, I have never been to the Derby, but no one has come so near as Perrot to convincing me that I have. And that old safe, peaceful life before the War, how a dozen of these sketches bring it back—the funerals, Florence Nightingale's, Holman Hunt's, General Booth's, King Edward VII's; little odd sketches—a reading by Miss Sitwell, the Birmingham Onion Fair, Paulhan in 1909 (the year that Blériot flew the Channel) taking the air at Hendon in his primitive machine, in an attempt to get as far as Crewe; Old Sadler's Wells, London Bridge on Coronation Day in 1911, the unveiling of the Queen Victoria Memorial by the King, with the German Emperor standing by his side. How easily it might all have been ephemeral journalism injudiciously exhumed; how incontestably it holds its place as raw material of history.

Which means that Perrot was in fact the one thing he most sought to be, the thing it would be the highest praise to call him, a good journalist. To measure the journalism of today in the light of reprints like these is to condemn nine-tenths of it. The standard I admit, like any set by *The Manchester Guardian*, is formidable. From 1901 till his death in 1928 Perrot was a *Guardian* reporter—never more than a reporter, never wanting to be more. He was no doubt more in a sense; he was a "special writer," stationed in London, not in Manchester, and reporting national events for a mainly provincial public. But he was a northerner himself, which gave him the advantage of knowing his readers and having them always sub-consciously in his mind, realising what their range of knowledge was—what, in his descriptives, could be taken for granted and what

needed a word of timely explanation. All that was craftsmanship, and in a journalistic career now fairly long I have never known a journalist who was a better craftsman.

But there were higher qualities in Perrot than that, and it is these that make his reprinted articles a pattern for journalists of today. The book is entitled, with a happy and just simplicity, *Reporter*. That word is often given a derogatory turn, reserved for the junior who can take a verbatim note and bring in a column or so of a public speech, to be summarily cut by a sardonic sub-editor to a meagre "stick" of twenty lines. That, no doubt, is all in the journalist's day's work, but men like Perrot have given reporting the dignity it deserves. The reporter, for them, is the man who sees an event or ceremony that his readers have no means of seeing, and describes it for them as it happened. For the reporter whose standard is high enough no more exacting task can be conceived. To make his readers see it as it was, omitting nothing and adding nothing, is a positive and negative achievement of no common order. Some events, of course, are indescribable. Could any writer convey to readers, say in Manchester, what the first Armistice Day in London really was? Whether Perrot succeeded there is arguable; if not, he came as near it as any journalist could.

But it is over-writing more than under-writing that we suffer from today. The essential is to "make a story." Facts no doubt are useful as a starting-point, but when once the descriptive writer has got well away, they cease to be more than an irritating irrelevance. It is here that a course of Perrot is so supremely salutary. For the primary and determining factor in all he wrote was an unswerving honesty. You could be certain, whenever you read an article above his initials or below his name (which was seldom, for the anonymity was usually complete), that what was written there was precisely what happened, all that mattered in it and not one word more—for in his refusal to waste words he was adamant. A journalist like that must be almost austere in his fidelity to truth. Hardly an article but could be improved, certainly for the popular papers of today, by a touch of exaggeration, an imaginative digression, a conscious but effective falsification of values. If Perrot's work, in which no touch of that degeneracy appeared, was saved from austerity it was because of the foundation of culture on which his mental attitudes were based. He took an Aeschylus to the Alps; he read a French or English classic in the tube on his way home at night; he was better versed in literature generally than many Literary Editors. Never obtruded, never displayed for the sake of display,

it showed through all his work. And with it all he was content to be, he preferred to be,—a reporter.

The choice does him honour. What we have a right to ask of the Daily Press today is not that the opinions in its leader columns should be congenial to us, not even that they should be reasonable, not even, necessarily, that they should be honest. We can form our opinions for ourselves if we are given in the news columns the necessary material, and that material is an honest, balanced, unexaggerated, undistorted statement of the facts. I doubt if Perrot ever wrote an article in which all those conditions were not fulfilled. It was not that he held a neutral position or had a neutral mind. He was as convinced a Liberal as ever lived. But for him facts were facts, whether the eye that saw and the pen that recorded them belonged to a Conservative or a Liberal, a Communist or a Nazi. By facts I mean, and he meant, all the facts; no more plausible misrepresentation can be devised than the story in which every recorded fact is true and all that is wrong is that as many as are recorded are suppressed, as calculated to disturb the conclusion it is sought to draw. You could never find Perrot basing his conclusions (not that he often drew any, for they are no part of a reporter's business) on selected facts.

A final word on craftsmanship. These articles have, we may take it, been reproduced as they appeared. No additions, no excisions, no revision. That alone makes the book remarkable, for it means that its contents are simply picked examples of the routine journalist's daily assignment. The Derby is run at three, and Epsom is some way, by time, on Derby Day from Fleet Street. But the description must be written and on the wire by nine or ten. So with nearly everything here; it was written to be read tomorrow and then forgotten. For writing like that to be disinterred from the forgotten files and represented in the form reserved for what is commonly termed, by distinction, literature, is a searching test. All that need be said of Perrot's work is that even so judged it stands approved. You do not expect of a daily journalist "the indispensable word in the inevitable place." Yet it is surprising how near you come here to getting it, partly no doubt because Perrot was never satisfied with less, and where most men would fold their copy with relief and hand it over, he would be revising and abbreviating and improving till a harassed telegraphist tore it forcibly from his fingers.

Perrot's editor, C. P. Scott, once said to the present¹ Editor of the *Birmingham Post*: "How excellent, how increasingly excellent,

¹ No longer "present"; Mr. Record died in April, 1943.

is Perrot." That, from C. P., was eulogy enough for any man. I have headed this article "A Good Journalist." Why not "A Great Journalist"? Not because it would not have been true; within the limits Perrot set himself it would. But Perrot shrank from the least hint of overstatement. A Good Journalist is what he wanted to be, and was.

The Road to Munich

FIVE NAZI YEARS

It was on January 30th, 1933, five years ago almost to a day, that Herr Adolf Hitler was invited by President Hindenburg to become Chancellor of the German Republic. The National Socialist Party of which he was the head was not supported by a majority of the electorate, and even at the March elections—the last at which candidates of any party except one have been permitted—with all the advantage which the significantly opportune Reichstag fire conferred, the Party could only secure 44 per cent. of the votes. But that was enough. An alliance with Herr Hugenberg's Nationalist Party, to be thrown over summarily as soon as it had served its purpose, together with the exclusion of the Communists from the Chamber, placed the Reichstag at Herr Hitler's disposal, while the activities of the Black and Brown Guards in the streets, in private houses and at such public gatherings as anyone ventured to attend made the dominance of the Nazi Party in the State secure. From that to the identification of the Party with the State the path was relatively smooth. Rival political parties were dissolved, the trade unions were suppressed, inconvenient personalities were relegated to concentration camps, the Press was "regulated" by a rigorous censorship, and Dr. Goebbels' Ministry of Enlightenment and Propaganda was brought into being to supplement by its positive activities the negative measures involved in the muzzling of the Press. The process did indeed suffer occasional checks. There was unrest within the Party, and the blood-bath of June, 1934, was the consequence. The Churches refused to deify the State, and they remain the only elements of resistance to the Nazi Party today. With that exception National Socialism is supreme in Germany.

The record of National Socialism's first five years deserves examination. On the whole Herr Hitler has good reason to be satisfied with his handiwork. His claim is that he has re-created Germany, and its justice can hardly be denied. Germany might be a happier country in every way if President Hindenburg had not thrown over Dr. Brüning in 1932, or it might not. Dr. Brüning would not have violated treaties, as Herr Hitler has not hesitated to do, and even under Herr von Papen or General Schleicher Germany might have concluded agreements with Britain and France on armaments,

as the Germany of von Papen did on reparations. But the Allied Powers have little to congratulate themselves on in their relations with Germany in the twelve years following the Treaty of Versailles, and the terms of that document were such that Herr Hitler's bitterest foreign critics have been slow to charge the German Chancellor with grave moral obliquity in resolving to disregard the provisions of the treaty after the failure of repeated attempts to change them. The return to conscription and the resumption of armament on the great scale was inevitable in face of the failure of Germany's former enemies to reduce their own armaments as the Treaty of Versailles, the League of Nations Covenant and the Preamble to the Treaty of Locarno plainly contemplated. It has been said that it was the France of Poincaré that made the Germany of Hitler. The entry of France into the Ruhr was an evil day for Europe. And what M. Poincaré began M. Barthou completed.

Now Europe may contemplate the results of five years of National Socialism. The results economically to Germany herself have on the whole been favourable. The results politically and socially are familiar. Germany is a country where, in order that the supremacy of a single party may be maintained, truth in the sense of the whole truth and nothing but the truth is proscribed. Germans are not allowed to know what other nations think of them. President Roosevelt makes a speech denouncing dictatorships, and a few colourless paragraphs alone are admitted to the German Press. It must never be known that Nazi policies and practices, particularly the brutal persecution of the Jews, have brought Germany into universal odium. All that must be known is that Herr Hitler's rearmament campaign, with guns instead of butter, has made Germany feared, or, as Herr Hitler would say, respected. Internally Germany's condition is a strange mixture. Unemployment has been substantially reduced, great public works have been carried out, labour service with many admirable features has been instituted, the standard of living has fallen, clothing and utensils are made of substitutes through shortage of the normal raw materials, the free expression of opinion is suppressed and spies abound, children are being more and more withdrawn from the authority of the family and the Church to be subjected to the authority of the Party and the State. A régime of bleak and often harsh austerity is declared to be necessary in the interests of defence by a Government which in fact no external danger threatens.

If such is the internal condition of Germany today, and if Germany is a country which, while that condition prevails, most inhabitants

of this realm may be thankful not to live in, that, it may with much reason be contended, is Germany's affair, not ours. It is. Except so far as the spirit underlying the internal régime determines Germany's relationship to other countries, it is quite definitely not our business. The foreign policy of Nazi Germany is another matter. Whatever it is, we must judge it on its merits. The fact that Germany is a totalitarian State and Great Britain a democracy in no way excludes the possibility of reasonable co-operation in Europe and elsewhere. Whether such co-operation is in fact a possibility depends on what Germany's ultimate ambitions are. She has left the League of Nations and Herr Hitler has declared she will never return to it; but the pain of eating his words would hardly weigh with him if there ever seemed to be advantage in sitting at the League Council Table after all. She has concluded the Anti-Comintern Pact with Japan and drawn Italy—but no other State so far—into it. The instrument may be presumed to be primarily anti-Russian, but two of its signatories are at present violently anti-British. Germany is not. There seems every reason to believe that she desires a good understanding with this country—provided the aims of the two are reconcilable. The desire is genuinely reciprocated—on the same condition.

Must those aims conflict? As between Germany and ourselves alone no insuperable difficulties need arise, for there is no ground for any open antagonism; we have concluded a naval limitation agreement; even differences about colonies, if no other collateral issues had to be considered, could be composed. But we cannot so restrict our relationship with Germany. Our interests and France's and Belgium's are identical. That in itself need cause no trouble, for Germany asks nothing of France or Belgium. But there is a far larger question. Does Germany regard law as the determining factor in the relationships between European States, or force? Till that question gets a clear answer there can be no settled peace, and none of that unclouded understanding between Germany and Britain which every Englishman would desire to see established. The magnitude of Germany's armaments does not mean that she has committed herself to force. In an armament race such as is now in progress the motive may be nothing more definite or saner than the mad unreason of competition. There is still time for that to be arrested. A demand for limitation backed by the British and German Governments would be decisive. Improbable as such a move may seem, it is not impossible. That it would be to Germany's economic interest is manifest. That the atmosphere it would create

would redound to her political interest is no less certain. The acceptance of such a policy by Herr Hitler—who has, to do him justice, offered precisely that once—would change the verdict of the world on his stewardship.

CHAMBERLAIN OR EDEN ?

THE news of Mr. Eden's resignation has been received with undisguised satisfaction in Berlin, Rome and Tokyo, and with undisguised dismay in Paris, Washington and Geneva. That in itself proves nothing, but it creates a presumption. Mr. Eden, ever since he became Parliamentary Private Secretary to Sir Austen Chamberlain twelve years ago,¹ has been immersed in the study of foreign affairs; Mr. Chamberlain has been Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Minister of Health, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and for nine months Prime Minister. That in itself proves nothing, but it creates a presumption. When, therefore, the Prime Minister takes the control of vital negotiations out of the hands of the Foreign Secretary, and so conducts them that the Foreign Secretary feels it necessary to resign, it is the Prime Minister's position rather than the Foreign Secretary's that needs to be vindicated. That may, of course, not be difficult. The Cabinet, with the exception of Mr. Eden, has stood by the Prime Minister. But there were notoriously many hesitations, and what averted other resignations was no doubt a consciousness of the need for doing everything possible to keep the appearance of Ministerial and national unity unimpaired.

The need for that is, indeed, imperious, but it is not paramount. To be united in going wrong is not better than to be solitary in going right. And Mr. Eden's case is that the Cabinet, under the lead of the Prime Minister, is going wrong. It is important to state the issue between the Premier and the late Foreign Secretary as clearly as it can be stated, and above all not to represent as grounds for difference points on which in fact there is full agreement. There is full agreement that there must be contact and discussion, and as much practical co-operation as is possible without sacrifice of principle, between democracies and dictatorships. Mr. Eden never questioned that. He never questioned the need for such contact with Italy in particular. Where, then, did the point of cleavage come? It came, there can be no reasonable doubt, when Mr. Eden saw the Prime

¹ Written in February 1938.

Minister taking a position that seemed inevitably to involve his accepting from Italy as part of a bargain actions which we are fully entitled to ask from her without any bargain at all and before any talk of bargains begins. To approach a dictator so may well be held disastrous.

If that, as appears to be the case, was Mr. Eden's position, it is plain common-sense. It would have involved no public challenge to Italy, for though Mr. Eden was ready for conversations with Italy at the right moment there is nothing to suggest that he would have given them the form that Mr. Chamberlain, with very doubtful wisdom, favours. The machinery of communication with Italy is not defective. There is an able British Ambassador in Rome and an able Italian Ambassador in London. Prudent advances could have been made—they were in fact being made—through either envoy in either capital, ground cleared, aims clarified, difficulties, if removable, removed. The dangerous limelight of publicity would not have been focussed on the interchanges. "Conversations" on which the prestige as well as the material interests of both nations are staked would not have been proclaimed to the world. Mr. Chamberlain's intervention, his direct approach to Signor Mussolini, his summons of Count Grandi to 10 Downing Street, have all made it certain that if the projected conversations fail, the general situation will be substantially worse than it was before. Disagreements after publicly announced attempts to agree have consequences. Mr. Eden realises that; there is no sufficient sign that the Prime Minister does.

But the content of the proposed conversations is far more important than the form. We want something from Italy; she wants something from us. That sounds a promising situation. But, in actual fact, is it? What we want from Italy is the abandonment of actions which are either plainly provocative or plain breaches of engagements—hostile propaganda, the massing of troops in Libya, the prosecution of the war in Spain. Are we to offer some substantial *quid pro quo* for that—in other words, make it materially worth while for Italy to conduct herself as any nation observing ordinary decencies does conduct itself—or are we to intimate, by the ordinary private methods of diplomatic communication, that while Italy is declining to observe engagements into which both she and we have entered, and which we have throughout observed ourselves, no effective negotiations on larger issues can be set on foot? That, again, appears to be the issue between the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden, and it is hard to doubt that Mr. Eden is absolutely right. It is true that both this country and Italy need agreement, but any

British negotiator is entitled to remind Signor Mussolini in Sir Philip Sidney's words that "thy need is greater than mine." Time, moreover, does not appear to press to the extent that the Prime Minister suggests, unless indeed he possesses information which he has apparently so far not imparted to Mr. Eden. There is nothing to suggest that we are compelled to condone breaches of contract in order to get accord at any cost.

What is the actual position regarding Italy's engagements? They concern primarily Spain. Italy on August 21st, 1936, accepted the non-intervention agreement, binding her, like other signatories, to refrain from allowing the export of war material to Spain; she has been violating that agreement ever since. She has indeed, as all the world knows, been keeping troops to a total estimated at one time at 100,000 (though it was soon reduced) in Spain, and the appalling destruction of civilian life in cities in the Spanish Government's area has notoriously been the work mainly of Italian and German aeroplanes; what the origin of the submarines was which were conducting a ruthless and indiscriminate campaign of piracy last summer is a matter on which no serious doubt remains. That campaign was ended by the one firm action taken by this country—and it was taken at Nyon by Mr. Eden and M. Delbos, Italy hastening to identify herself with the decisions reached there in her voluntary absence, and the attacks thereafter ceasing entirely. Now the Non-Intervention Committee has at last secured accord on the withdrawal of foreign troops from Spain. Italy indicated her agreement in principle to the British proposals to that end in the first week of last November. The actual execution of that plan by Italy was clearly the best test possible of her good faith in international affairs, and it was manifest wisdom to regard it so and wait for its results. That was the view Mr. Eden always held, and holds still.

The Prime Minister, however, has decided otherwise, and is so certain he is right that he has not hesitated to risk division in his Party and the country by sacrificing a Foreign Secretary whose expulsion from his office the Italian Press had been officially instructed to demand. Thereby he has undoubtedly created a favourable atmosphere. Signor Mussolini will, within limits, be ready to concede to Mr. Chamberlain what he would not concede to Mr. Eden. And he no doubt counts on Mr. Chamberlain's offering a higher price. In that he may meet with some disillusion, but since Mr. Chamberlain has made it perfectly clear that in certain eventualities he would be prepared to recognise the Italian conquest of Abyssinia, it is as well to reflect on what that condonation of treaty-

violation would involve. In March, 1932, after Japan's seizure of Manchukuo, the League of Nations Assembly unanimously (apart from China and Japan) declared it incumbent on Members of the League "not to recognise any situation, treaty or agreement which may be brought about by means contrary to the League of Nations Covenant or the Pact of Paris," and that agreement so far stands. But it will not stand many weeks longer if the Prime Minister, whose ill-judged proclamation of the folly of thinking that small States will get any support from League Powers was a strange rejoinder to Herr Hitler's acts and threats, carries out what appears to be his policy. If the Italian conquest of Abyssinia is recognised there can be no logic in continuing to withhold recognition of the less reprehensible Japanese conquest of Manchukuo. And, as an American critic has pointed out with pertinence, if that, why not recognition of all the Japanese conquests in North China? In the light of that the Prime Minister will perhaps think again about Abyssinia. On him the responsibility for the immediate past and the immediate future rests. No one—least of all Mr. Eden—can wish him anything but complete success. It is impossible to think he has made a good beginning, but at least we can hope, with what confidence we may muster, for a happy ending.

AUSTRIA AS VASSAL

HERR HITLER, having achieved his army purge, is about to address the Reichstag on his future policy. Meanwhile he has anticipated an essential part of his statement by action. It may be said that what has taken place in Austria is not his action but Dr. Schuschnigg's. That would be merely to toy with words. The Cabinet changes announced in Vienna in the early hours of Wednesday¹ were in all essentials decided and dictated by Herr Hitler in his interview with the Austrian Chancellor on Sunday. About that there can be no question. Austria has capitulated under menace. The story that Herr Hitler had his generals in an adjoining room as a stimulus to his guest has been denied. Whether it is true or false is immaterial. What happened at Berchtesgaden is completely clear; all that is obscure is why a rumour gained currency that victory in the struggle staged there rested with Dr. Schuschnigg. The first step in Germany's eastward drive has always been, necessarily and in-

¹ February 13th, 1938.

evitably, the domination of Austria. It might be mere assimilation, *Gleichshaltung*, it might be nominally voluntary reunion, *Anschluss*, it might be naked annexation. The last of the three would be the line of greatest resistance, and Herr Hitler has clearly never contemplated it except as a desperate last resort. There are easier ways, and the easiest is the attainment of the *Anschluss* by way of an intermediate period of *Gleichshaltung*.

Half that road, at least, has now been travelled. Austrian independence is nominally not infringed. It is indeed formally reaffirmed. For an independent Austria with all its motions determined by Berlin there is clearly much to be said from the German point of view as a matter of practical convenience. But to make that a reality the elements in Austria most favourable to Germany, that is the Austrian Nazis, must have the path to power laid open to them, and the foreign policy of the country must be in the hands of a man no more disposed to question Herr Hitler's decisions than Herr von Ribbentrop. That, so far, has notoriously not been the case. Only one party, the Fatherland Front, has been permitted in Austria, and Dr. Skubl, the Police-President of Vienna, has had charge of the police and security throughout the country and so discharged his responsibilities that Nazi ebullience has been held well in check. At the same time Dr. Guido Schmidt, as Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, has remained strictly subordinate to Dr. Schuschnigg, who retained in his own hands the ultimate control. Now, under the pressure exerted at Berchtesgaden, a prominent Roman Catholic lawyer, Dr. Seyss-Inquart, with pronounced Nazi sympathies, becomes Minister for the Interior, responsibility for public security being transferred to that office, and Dr. Schmidt is elevated to the position of Foreign Minister, Dr. Schuschnigg henceforward concerning himself no more with foreign policy than the head of a Cabinet necessarily must. As to what the pressure was whereby these vital concessions were extorted, there can be no reasonable doubt that the method always favoured, the threat of a Nazi rising in Austria, with German intervention as a natural consequence, was successfully employed.

That, on paper, is the situation. What it is in reality can hardly be discovered yet. Herr Hitler's forthcoming Reichstag speech may have some bearing on it. Not a great deal is known of the new Minister of the Interior, who must be regarded as the key-figure. He may be a patriotic Austrian, unreconciled to seeing his country's independence reduced to fiction. He has pledged himself to carry out the law—and the law allows only one party, not the Nazi party,

to exist in Austria—and he may intend to make good his pledge. Dr. Schmidt may, in his new position, contemplate a change in Austrian foreign policy in regard to Germany only, not in relation, for example, to Czechoslovakia and other members of the Little Entente. That can only be revealed as the new Cabinet in Vienna settles to its work. Dr. Schuschnigg is still Chancellor and Dr. Miklas President, and to both of them the independence of Austria matters more than anything in political life. But no one with the history of the past five years before him can base hopes of any substance on such possibilities. It is wise in this case to look realistically at the situation as the Berchtesgaden interview has left it. And realism compels the conviction that the outlook is profoundly sombre both for Austria and for the Continent whose destinies Austria's fate must so critically affect. If, in fact, developments show current fears to be exaggerated the relief in every capital will be immense. But false optimism now will only rob judgements of any stable basis.

For the external effects of what is little less than a political revolution in Austria are unmistakable. Domination of Austria, it has been said, is and always has been the first step in Germany's eastward drive. Is there a second step, and if so, what is it? About that there can be equally little misconception. Czechoslovakia has been the target for German threats for the past three years, and a glance at the map will show the strategic effect on Czechoslovakia of the Germanisation of Austria. She will have hostile territory for hundreds of miles along her southern as well as her northern frontier—if indeed Austria, which is now conspicuously friendly, does change her attitude. And the technique in regard to Czechoslovakia resembles significantly that employed in regard to Austria. There is in Czechoslovakia a German-speaking minority, with which Berlin keeps in constant touch and which it is profitable to misrepresent as seriously oppressed. An outbreak by the Sudeten-deutsch would give the same excuse for German intervention as a Nazi rising in Austria would have done if Herr Hitler had not found it possible to achieve his ends by menace and stop short of armed action. There is no capital in Europe in which the drama of Berchtesgaden and Vienna can have caused so deep disquiet as in Prague.

That the situation is fraught with larger and more disturbing possibilities is manifest. Czechoslovakia stands in a very different position from Austria. Austria is, after all, closely associated by language and history with Germany. Neither of these ties binds

Czechoslovakia to Berlin. Austria, moreover, is militarily powerless. Czechoslovakia is not. She is well-armed, and she would certainly defend herself with vigour against external attack, and with the greater hope in that France is bound by pledges recently and publicly renewed to come to her help in the event of an attack by Germany. Russia is bound equally. She would probably honour her pledge; France certainly would. There can be no misunderstanding therefore of what a second forward move by Germany would involve. And if there are any who think it would be possible for Britain to see France locked in a new conflict with Germany and stand aloof itself, they must be as blind in their understanding of the past as in their estimate of the future. We are not faced with a decision on that vital question yet, and we need not assume it as certain that we ever shall be. But Europe today is full of unknown factors that keep everything in flux. What can Russia, with her preoccupations in Asia, do in Europe? Is Italy's strange acceptance of the vassalage of Austria due to her own inherent weakness or to a promise of fresh German support for her adventure in Spain? Can and will King Carol keep Rumania loyal to the Little Entente? What is the future of Poland, divided domestically and perplexed externally? Some of those questions may be easier to answer after the Reichstag speech.

AFTER AUSTRIA——?

WITH the manner in which Herr Hitler's annexation of Austria to Germany was effected we are no longer concerned, except as an ominous object-lesson. The blow was dealt by a Government that knows no morality but force and recognises no judgement but what it passes itself in its own cause. It was a violation of repeated pledges and it makes every future undertaking given by Germany worthless and irrelevant. Contact will still have to be maintained with her, and conceivably some day agreements made with her, but only such agreements, if any shape themselves, as it is obviously to her interest to observe and to her detriment to violate. This latest stroke was manifestly the fruit of no sudden decision. The swiftness and the astonishing efficiency with which a detailed programme of occupation was carried out make any suggestion of sudden improvisation fantastic. There can be little doubt that the purgation of those

German generals adverse to external-adventures was the first move in the studied plan, the Berchtesgaden interview the second, and the Schuschnigg plebiscite an opportune occasion for the firing of the train.

On one point there must be no misunderstanding. To a union between Germany and Austria by a free decision of both peoples no reasonable person in this country could have offered opposition, no matter how the text of the Treaty of Versailles may read. There was a time when both countries did desire that union, and it might well have been better for both if it had been accomplished then. But since Germany became a Nazi State in 1933, still more since the Austrian Chancellor, Dr. Dollfuss, fell victim to Nazi assassins in 1934, the one dread of the majority of the Austrian people has been absorption by their powerful neighbour. Herr Hitler knew that well. He knew that the plebiscite announced by Dr. Schuschnigg, in which the people was called on to express its views on the simple and elementary question of the retention of its independence, would be fatal to his plans. Hence his decision to invoke the favourite weapon of force, which in the circumstances had not to be carried beyond the threat of force. If Herr Hitler really believed for a moment that ninety per cent. of the Austrian people favoured union, nothing should have been more welcome to him than the plebiscite. But it was as clear in Berlin as in London that the decision would be for independence. So Hitler struck.

What of the future? This must never be forgotten, that if aggression is contemplated the advantage is always with the aggressor. He can mature his plans in the secret of his heart, or in a circle of his closest intimates, and choose, or make, the occasion that suits him for sudden action. Against that there is no protection except the desperate and unjustifiable expedient of a preventive war, or the mobilisation of an overwhelming force to resist aggression anywhere. It is to the latter course, in whatever form, that half the nations of Europe are being driven—to the utter economic ruin of the continent even if actual war is thereby averted. But is Herr Hitler an aggressor still, or is his ambition satisfied? No one can tell. Elaborate assurances have in the last few days been given by Berlin to Prague—and their value is fixed by the assurances given not two years ago by Berlin to Vienna. At the same time Austria is no doubt a special case. It was a German-speaking country and Herr Hitler's native land. His mind has been set from boyhood on its reunion with Germany itself. Whatever designs he may harbour against Czechoslovakia, they are of a different order from his designs on Austria.

But Herr Hitler, and still more Field-Marshal Goering, have been eloquent on Germany's rôle as protector of the Germans outside the Reich. What does that portend? There are Germans under Italian sovereignty in the Southern Tyrol; Germans under Polish sovereignty in Silesia; Germans under Rumanian sovereignty in Transylvania. Prague is not the only capital where anxiety need be felt today.

It does not follow that any immediate stroke against Czechoslovakia is impending. Herr Hitler has never asked for more than autonomy for the Germans in Bohemia, and they have been given a considerable measure of it already. The Czech army and air force are strong and would certainly fight, and certainly be supported at once by France, and perhaps by Russia, with its highly developed air arm. Herr Hitler has never so far attempted anything but bloodless victories, and he knows that if he attacked Czechoslovakia the battleground would be the home of the Bohemian Germans. It might be simpler and hardly less effective to force concessions from Dr. Benes' Government through the economic pressure which the establishment of Germany on Czechoslovakia's southern as well as her northern and western frontiers will enable him to exert. If, which is by no means certain, he has another victim already marked down for domination or penetration—it is not clear that he aspires to rule non-German populations—it may well be Hungary, which would carry the economic investment of Czechoslovakia a long stage further. And it would not be difficult to achieve that by means which would give no excuse for external opposition.

But what prospect is there of external opposition to Germany's ambitions in any case? The answer to that depends on the critical decisions to be taken by the British Cabinet—a Cabinet most gravely weakened, as nine men out of ten must realise now, by Mr. Eden's resignation, and a Cabinet which could still be enormously increased in strength by the inclusion of Mr. Churchill. There will, of course, be no such inclusion unless the Cabinet reconciles itself to adopting the policy for which Mr. Churchill stands. But the barrenness of any alternative to that policy grows clearer every day. No nation, not even our own, can count on success if embroiled with Germany today. Let us then, it may be rejoined, avoid at all costs embroilment with her. To purchase temporary immunity that way might be possible; meanwhile Germany would be growing steadily stronger and could choose her time for turning north-west as she chose it for turning south-east. Moreover, France is pledged to fight if Czechoslovakia is attacked, and it has never been seriously contended that

we could hold aloof if Germany and France were fighting again in Flanders. If that is true, if France's defence of Czechoslovakia would inevitably involve us sooner or later—quite possibly too late, and after Herr Hitler has been tempted to gamble on our hesitations—is not the best service we can render to the peace of Europe to dispel uncertainty on that score and make it clear that if Czechoslovakia is attacked we, like France, shall stand by a fellow-member of the League in accordance with the provisions of the Covenant?

That, as Mr. Churchill observed, would be the beginning of the reconstruction of the shattered fabric of the Covenant. It would be a warning to some but a menace to none. And round that nucleus other States would gather. Rumania and Jugoslavia, fellow-members with Czechoslovakia of the Little Entente, could hardly fail to. Russia is still bound by a mutual defence pact to Czechoslovakia, and though recent events may have weakened her they have certainly not left her impotent. That is a formidable *bloc*, and it would be bound together not merely by a Pact signed nineteen years ago but by the powerful motive of self-interest. But on this country's part in it one word is necessary. If France invites us to stand with her for the defence of small States she must deny herself the luxury of domestic crises twice a year. The resignation of M. Chaumets at the precise moment when the Schuschnigg plebiscite was to be taken appears on this side of the Channel almost criminal in its levity. And it is not the first time that dissensions in France have given Nazi Germany its opportunity. We have never stood closer in spirit or sympathy to France than we do today. But we cannot stake our lives on the fortunes of a France whose internal conflicts may at any moment paralyse her external effort.

EUROPE AND THE CRISIS

THE German Press has been insisting with great volubility and vigour that there is and has been in fact no crisis, since Germany never dreamed of military action against Czechoslovakia. Simultaneously, it insists that any further "incidents" on the Czechoslovakian side of the frontier will lead to action by Germany, and Herr von Ribbentrop is said to have informed the British Ambassador that in such circumstances it might be impossible to restrain the German people—a situation which would seem to argue a deplorable

breakdown of Dr. Goebbels' singularly efficient machinery for rationing the public with selected facts and schooling it in selected opinions. The protestations carry small conviction. Europe has been thoroughly familiarised by the invasion of Austria with the German technique of external intervention—a complaint that Germans under another rule are being oppressed, followed by action in their defence by the German army—and the application of that technique to Czechoslovakia has long been expected. The grievances, neither many nor serious, of the Sudeten Germans in Bohemia have been systematically exaggerated and their discontents assiduously encouraged, and the menacing tone of the German Press immediately before the recent municipal elections in Czechoslovakia, together with troop movements which, even if they were only of a routine character, bore a suspicious resemblance to those which heralded the invasion of Austria, abundantly justified the fear that Germany was contemplating the use of force in support of the Sudeten Germans' claims.

That fear was not peculiar to London. It was shared to the full in Paris and Warsaw (where the papers were openly discussing what the effect of German domination of Czechoslovakia would be), while the relief evinced in other European capitals, notably Rome and Bucharest, at the relaxation of the tension is a measure of what the previous anxiety had been. There can be no question of the reality or the gravity of the crisis, and there can as yet be no assurance that the outlook is permanently improved. The German menace to Czechoslovakia, for such it undoubtedly was and is, has developed a new intensity since the annexation of Austria, and the grievances of the Sudeten Germans, instead of being treated on their own merits, are being used undisguisedly as a factor in the German strategy aiming at the extension of German influence south-eastwards. The chess-board on which the pawns are being manœuvred is not Czechoslovakia but Europe, and a false move by one player may plunge not a country but a continent in war. It is with that knowledge in their minds and that responsibility on their shoulders that the Cabinets in London and Paris have been acting. They have acted with firmness, wisdom and restraint, but Germany has been left no excuse for the belief that if she moved against Czechoslovakia she would be faced by Czechoslovakia alone.

In such action there is, of course, no constructive element. It helps to avert war by demonstrating that war if it came would be on a European scale, but it does nothing to remove the causes of war. There are, it may be rejoined, no good causes for war in Europe

today, only bad excuses. But even the bad excuses must be removed so far as may be, and Britain and France would not have been justified in the warnings they sounded in Berlin, and the appeals they made there for moderation and restraint, if they had not simultaneously been urging the Government at Prague to go to the utmost length consistent with security and sovereignty in its endeavours to meet every reasonable claim that the Sudeten Germans could advance. That advice has in fact been proffered, and it is clear that it has been taken. If nothing were in question but the rights of the Sudeten Germans, and there were no reason to believe that they were acting under direction from Berlin, a permanent and satisfactory settlement could undoubtedly be reached.

It still may be. Herr Henlein, the Sudeten German leader, when in London recently outlined terms of settlement which it should be by no means impossible for the Czechoslovak Government to accept, and the first interview between Herr Henlein and the Prime Minister, Dr. Hodza, at Prague appears to have taken a reasonably hopeful course. The Government's new Minority Statute has been drafted, and if unofficial forecasts of its contents are accurate it makes every concession that could reasonably be hoped for, even to contemplating the formation of a regional council in the Sudeten German area to direct local affairs and administer public funds, to be allotted on a scale corresponding with the proportion the Sudeten Germans bear to the whole population of the country. National defence and security measures necessary for the maintenance of internal order must, of course, remain under the control of the Central Government, and the rights of the Czech minority in Sudeten German areas must be safeguarded. But subject to that it is hard to see what Herr Henlein could ask that is not being freely offered.

The situation is serious, but less so than it was a week ago. The first series of municipal elections in Czechoslovakia was carried out with a freedom from disturbance which reflects equal credit on the restraint shown by either party; the decision of the Czechoslovak Government to call up one class of reservists to help in the maintenance of order was fully justified. But the next series are on a much larger scale, and till they are safely over the danger of incidents that may exacerbate relations further will remain. Meanwhile the order that prevailed during the funeral of two Sudeten Germans who were shot by Czech frontier guards in circumstances still to be finally elucidated is an encouraging sign, and confirms the impression that if Czechoslovaks and Sudetendeutsch were left to settle their differences alone a settlement could soon be reached. The aim of British

diplomacy is to moderate demands on the one side and stimulate concessions on the other, and at the same time to make it perfectly clear what the consequences of external intervention may be. In that it has to all appearance been successful, a conclusion which the sudden outburst of anti-British articles in the German Press goes some way to confirm. There is no question that if Czechoslovakia had been no better prepared than Austria, Germany would have settled the Sudeten German question with the same high hand as proved so effective at Vienna. But Czechoslovakia, though manifestly unequal to a contest *à deux* with Germany, is capable of giving a good account of herself till help comes, and in this case it was made unmistakably plain that if she were attacked help would in fact come immediately from France and Russia. British attempts at conciliation at Berlin were certainly accompanied by intimations of our interest in Czechoslovakia at least as strong as the language used by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons last month, and though Poland no doubt avoided committing herself her attitude was not such as to encourage Herr Hitler to count on her support. There was no likelihood that Italy either would be more than neutral. As a result something like what Mr. Churchill has called a rudimentary and emergency form of collective security has been achieved. A breathing-space is gained, in which the work of removing causes of conflict and developing understandings wherever possible must be pursued. That is the first task of British diplomacy in regard not only to Czechoslovakia but to Spain.

A CRITICAL FORTNIGHT

A NUMBER of circumstances, which it would be laborious and unnecessary to enumerate in any completeness, and which may, in fact, be less intrinsically significant than they appear, suggest that the second half of this month ¹ may be a particularly critical period in European affairs. The German army manœuvres, which would lend cover to any troop movements that political considerations might dictate, begin on August 15th. The Rome-Berlin axis promises to be further strengthened during the visit of General Balbo, Governor of Libya and a former Italian Air Minister, to Berlin this week. Other visitors to Berlin in the immediate future are Admiral Horthy,

¹ August 1938.

the Regent, and M. Imrédy, the Prime Minister, of Hungary. To that special importance attaches, in view of the opinion widely prevalent that Germany, taking the line of least resistance, will proceed next to the penetration of Hungary, and that behind the courtesies which will attend the coming visit will be intimations not dissimilar to those imparted to Dr. von Schuschnigg on his last and fatal visit to Berchtesgaden. Meanwhile the fortification of the Rhineland is proceeding feverishly, the German Press is keeping the flame of anti-Czech feeling sufficiently fanned to ensure universal support for Herr Hitler if he should decide that some real or fictitious injury to Sudeten Germans must be avenged, and hope of any liquidation of the situation in Spain is deferred if not dispelled by the failure of General Franco to give any reply to the British Note embodying the proposals approved by the Non-Intervention Committee.

That is one side of the picture. It is a disturbingly dark side, but not for that reason to be concealed or ignored; if there is to be any realism in politics the first essential is that the facts should be seen as they are. Fortunately it is not the only side. While some factors are intensifying the strain in Europe, others are tending slightly to relax it. The Anglo-Italian agreement was and is a case in point, in spite of the failure of Italy to do anything to produce the conditions on which its ratification depends. Lord Runciman's mission to Czechoslovakia is very decidedly another. If the visit of General Balbo to Berlin is to be noted, the impending visit of General Vuillemin, Chief of the French Air Staff, to the German capital must in fairness be noted with it. And there is no warrant for dismissing the assurances of goodwill conveyed recently by Captain Wiedemann from Herr Hitler to Lord Halifax as disingenuous. The Foreign Secretary, there is reason to believe, was satisfied of their sincerity. In one thing Herr Hitler is unquestionably sincere, a strong desire to avoid war if Germany can get what she wants without it. The charge against him is that he is deliberately pursuing a policy which may make war unavoidable.

Even that is among the numberless uncertainties of the situation. Herr Hitler's recent triumphs have been bloodless, and there was little reason to fear they would be otherwise. The occupation of the Rhineland was the greatest risk, and it is now universally believed that if France had marched the Germans would have retired. In Austria neither internal resistance nor external intervention was to be looked for. Whether the Czech mobilisation in the spring, together with the demonstration of the attitude of Great Britain and France,

stopped active measures which Germany would otherwise have taken is one more uncertainty still; the odds are at least as strong in favour of that theory as against it. Altogether those who have been convinced for some time that Germany was systematically preparing to achieve her ends by force if she could not achieve them without it, and that her preparations would culminate in the second half of August, can marshal many significant facts to confirm their belief. But facts quite as important throw doubt on it. There is no reason to question the genuineness of the German welcome of Lord Runciman's mission. Largely as the result of assiduous propaganda and mass-suggestion, all Germany and almost all Sudetenland are satisfied that the justice of the Sudeten Germans' case is so palpable that Lord Runciman cannot but be convinced of it, and that through his advice they will gain all, or almost all, they could have gained by war, without ensuring the devastation of Sudetenland and risking the downfall of the Nazi régime in Germany in a conflict which there could be no hope of localising. Herr Hitler, therefore, should be no less ready than Dr. Benes to give the Runciman mission reasonable time to complete its work.

But overshadowing and enveloping all these detailed problems is the steady crystallisation of the world into two rival *blocs* such as those whose ultimate clash plunged humanity in disaster twenty-four years ago. The basis of each is a dual understanding, the Franco-British Entente on the one side, the Rome-Berlin Axis on the other. Of the third partners Russia, whatever the effect her recent purges have had on her military efficiency, can strengthen the Entente more than a Japan embroiled with China as well as Russia can the Axis. And of the lesser States of Europe the Entente could obviously count on Czechoslovakia, while the Axis could look nowhere (except possibly to Hungary) for anything better than a benevolent neutrality. With the joint resources of the British Empire thrown into the scale from the first, and America's ultimate participation inevitable in spite of the present strength of her isolationist resolve, the dictatorships in a prolonged war would have heavy odds against them. Fully conscious of that, they are counting not on a prolonged war but on a swift decision. Signor Mussolini has just declared that publicly in as many words; Germany is demonstrating it by the enormous development of her air force, and by the hurried fortification of the Rhineland to hold in check a French invasion if Germany should be striking at France's allies elsewhere. Our own aerial development has been considerable, but our defences cannot yet be equal to the demands that may be made

on them, and appeals for A.R.P. volunteers rest on as compelling considerations as they ever did.

Whatever the basis for the anxiety facts such as these are calculated to excite, there is abundant proof that the anxiety exists. There is a slump on the Berlin Bourse, francs are being heavily sold in Paris, gold is being bought on an unprecedented scale in London—an invariable sign of lack of confidence in securities and national currencies. Unfortunately there is little the British Government can do to increase confidence. That lies in the hands of Germany and Italy. In Germany Germans themselves are being convinced by the violence of the attacks on Czechoslovakia in the Government-controlled Press that such a verbal onslaught can only be the prelude to more concrete action. The latest example of German Press misrepresentation is the most flagrant of all, a fatal attack by German Social Democrats on a Sudeten German in Czechoslovakia being proclaimed in the first instance by every German paper except the *Frankfurter Zeitung* as the murder of a German by Czechs, while the truth, when it had to be admitted, was used as basis for attack on the incapacity of the Czech Government to keep order among its German subjects. Not a word of this could have appeared without the approval of the German Government, just as in another sphere it is not conceivable that General Franco would have refused all reply to the British Note on the withdrawal of volunteers if the German and Italian Governments, which supported the British plan on the Non-Intervention Committee, had genuinely wanted to see the plan adopted. Disquiet at such a situation is inevitable.

EUROPE'S HOPES AND FEARS

THE ancestral voices prophesying war have changed their date. By universal consent we were to beware the Ides of August, but the fact that that fateful day is now behind us can bring no comfort, for it appears that the crisis is only shifted to the Ides of September. It may well be so. The prophets of ill have all too plausible a basis for their calculations. The German manœuvres will still be in progress in the middle of September; more men, in all likelihood, will be under arms then than now, and they will be better trained men. The Czechoslovak negotiations can hardly be spun out longer than that; whatever accords Herr Hitler may have reached with Admiral Horthy and Dr. Imrédy regarding Hungary will be bearing

fruit by then; and in other centres of conflict or unrest General Franco and Count Ciano appear to be pursuing a policy of systematic procrastination which it must be supposed is dictated by some conscious purpose. Finally, and quite possibly the most important of all, the Nazi Party rally at Nuremberg, an occasion on which each year a momentous political pronouncement is expected from Herr Hitler, takes place in the first week of September.

But near as the Ides of September are, they are still too distant to tempt any prudent prophet to the exercise of his art; it is enough, and more than enough, to try to interpret and assess the events of a single week—a week that is finished, not a week of the unknown future. The attempt has in fact been made by a particularly well-informed and level-headed authority, Mr. Harold Nicolson, and with his conclusion, that on the whole the hopeful factors have in the past week slightly outweighed the disturbing, our emotions certainly will not quarrel and our reason need not. It is no assured conclusion. It is only reached by giving an arbitrary weight to imponderables, like the psychology of the hundred and thirty million citizens of the United States. But it may be accepted as a fair estimate of a situation in which every factor is uncertain, because it is susceptible of two alternative interpretations, if not of three. In spite of new grounds for anxiety peace has not in the past week become more insecure.

Among these new grounds is the reply of General Franco to the British Note regarding the withdrawal of foreign troops from Spain. The reply—delayed for more than six weeks without any reputable reason—is not a flat rejection, but it is very little better. Like Signor Mussolini, General Franco wants to reap benefits that were offered conditionally without fulfilling, or before fulfilling, the essential condition. Recognition of belligerency was offered when a minimum of 10,000 men had been withdrawn from the side found to have the fewer foreigners in its ranks and a proportionately higher number from the other side; General Franco not only demands recognition of belligerency before the withdrawal, but also insists that the withdrawals from each side shall be equal, not proportionate, which might mean that the Republicans would be stripped of all their foreigners and the insurgents left with a substantial number of theirs. A sinister concomitant of the reply is the fact that though on the Non-Intervention Committee Germany and Italy fully approved the British plan—a concession hailed with much premature enthusiasm—the German and Italian Press greet its virtual rejection by General Franco with applause.

At the same time the Italian Foreign Minister, who has diligently postponed his reply to the British representations regarding the alleged despatch of Italian reinforcements and munitions to Spain, now explains that of course the Italian forces in Spain have to be kept up to strength and wastage repaired. The same, no doubt, applies to the Italian air squadrons which launch destruction on Spanish ports and British ships from the Balearic Islands. The determination of British and French policy in the face of this situation raises serious problems. The natural impulse is to say, like a former British Prime Minister, "Enough of this fooling," and warn Berlin and Rome officially that if foreign help is continued on the one side it will be no longer withheld on the other, and that land frontiers cannot remain closed while sea frontiers remain open. But good impulses frequently make bad policy. If Spain became an international battlefield, it would not long remain the only battlefield. Non-intervention has succeeded in localising the Spanish war, and grave risks would be involved in its definite abandonment. A step which would seriously embroil Britain and France with Italy might be exactly what Herr Hitler wants. And it must be remembered that General Franco's Note does not in itself make the situation worse; it simply frustrates an attempt to make it better.

The fact is that in Spain, as in a dozen other fields, the democratic countries are in danger of being compelled to fight the dictators with their own debased weapons. Non-intervention is manifestly better than intervention, but the dictatorships intervene and it is increasingly hard for the democracies to refrain. In France the 40-hour week, which with all its drawbacks does represent a notable social reform, has to be modified, if not abandoned, because in Germany men are working 60 hours, primarily on munitions, and France cannot afford to be left behind. Here and throughout Europe vast sums are being spent, on a scale such as ultimately to affect the whole standard of life, on defences against possible air attack from one particular country, and that a country which has no cause to fear attack itself from any quarter. Our own air force, Sir Kingsley Wood has assured us, is growing stronger every day. In the circumstances we must welcome the announcement, for in the circumstances to be weak is to invite attack. But if the race in armaments does not end in war, it must ultimately end in ruin, and in ruin which may involve a social as well as a financial cataclysm. The alternative is air limitation by agreement. The rumour that Herr Hitler contemplates proposing such an agreement persists. If he does, and on a reasonable basis, he will have restored hope to

a world in which hope could still breed confidence, and confidence prosperity.

For hope in the past week we have had—except for the welcome Hungaro-Little Entente agreement—to look westward, a direction which our gaze may increasingly take in coming months. President Roosevelt's speech at Kingston, Ontario, brings immense encouragement, not because of his intimation that the United States would never stand idly by if Canada was in danger of external domination—the risk of that is after all remote—but because his words, gaining the greater weight from their relation to Mr. Cordell Hull's equally notable assurance five days earlier of America's concern in events in the other hemisphere, revealed a profound consciousness of the gulf separating the democratic and the totalitarian conceptions of life and the necessity for America to decide and to declare openly where she stands. It does not mean, for a moment, that the United States has abandoned her tradition of isolation. The President had no power to pledge his country to that. And in fact he is not pledging her to anything; he is wisely and patiently educating her. We ourselves ask nothing of the United States. Whatever she does, she will do not for us, but for ideals she believes in. But it is of immense importance that, as the President's speech reminded both countries—and other countries—her ideals and our own on such fundamentals as human liberty are in essentials the same.

THE FATE OF EUROPE

THERE can be no sane person in these islands who does not realise that within a space to be measured rather by weeks than by months—perhaps rather by days than by weeks—Great Britain may find itself at war. Alarming though that statement is it is not alarmist. It is implicit in every syllable of the references to the present international situation in Sir John Simon's last speech.¹ That speech reaffirmed, on the basis of deep deliberation between the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the Prime Minister had said, after deep deliberation by the Cabinet, five months before, and the Cabinet added its confirmation again this week. If Germany resorts to force against Czechoslovakia, if France and Russia honour their obligations and go to Czechoslovakia's aid, if in consequence France and Germany are at war,

¹ On August 27th, 1938.

the arguments in favour of our joining France in arms may well seem irresistible. Nothing less than the fate of Europe is at stake.

In such circumstances there must be no misunderstanding as to what the issue is. Nominally it is the degree of autonomy to be conceded to the Sudeten Germans in Czechoslovakia; actually it is whether the next step in German expansion is to be taken, by force or under the threat of force, at Czechoslovakia's expense. The decision lies with Herr Hitler, not Herr Henlein. It is only since Germany seized Austria by a successful threat of force that the Sudeten German question has become acute; till then it was being discussed on reasonable lines between the Sudeten Germans and the Government at Prague. Now it is with Berlin that Prague has to reckon. Any proposals put before Herr Henlein must be referred by him to a higher arbiter. It is the Leader of a country which has chosen this moment to put a million and a quarter men on a war-footing, and whose Press under official orders is carrying on a campaign of unexampled foulness and mendacity against a neighbouring State, who will decide between peace and war in Europe. Mr. Churchill makes a telling point when he reveals that a few months ago Herr Henlein told him what his conditions were, and they were such as he knew the Czech Government would concede. But unless the public opinion of the world, and warnings such as Sir John Simon sounded at Lanark, are sufficient to neutralise pressure from Berlin concessions will be irrelevant. A settlement, by all the indications, would be far less welcome to the Nazi leaders in Berlin than a breakdown that could be laid at the door of Prague.

But even in Germany public opinion counts for something. Naked aggression against Czechoslovakia would be generally condemned. If by any means possible, the Czechs must be provoked into some action that could be represented as itself aggressive; then the technique applied against Austria, a march to the rescue of downtrodden fellow-countrymen, could operate at once. Hence the fantastic conversion by the Berlin Press of tavern brawls into what the *Angriff* calls "bloody terror." There is no secret about what is happening in the Sudeten areas. Czechoslovakia is full of British and French and American journalists, and the British Government has special observers there; if in fact a bloody terror, or anything resembling it, were being created it would not be left for the German Press alone to discover it. Minor disturbances there are; serious trouble there is not. The Sudeten Germans are not downtrodden. They have political grievances which may be termed by courtesy substantial, though the word in reality exaggerates the facts. Lord Runciman

has made it perfectly clear that if it were a question simply of Dr. Hodza and Herr Henlein, not of Dr. Hodza and Herr Hitler, a settlement could be reached with relative ease. But to settle with a man whose mind seems set on a *casus belli* is no simple matter.

At this moment the latest and greatest concessions offered by the Czechs—from whose side alone any talk of concession has come—are under discussion. The Sudeten Germans and their Berlin patrons have been talking throughout of self-government on the model of Switzerland. Dr. Hodza now has gravely embarrassed them by offering precisely that. The details of his scheme have not been published, but it is known that it provides for the division of the country into some twenty or more cantons, in some of which the Germans will be in a large majority, with a central Federal Government as in Switzerland; it is known, too, that British Ministers, whose chief concern it has been to press the Czechs to the utmost limit of concession, having seen the scheme pronounce it just and generous. But the Germans, having asked for the Swiss model and got it, are now demanding the Irish model, and with a wholesale disregard of geography, history and politics are drawing a fantastic analogy between the position of Sudetendeutschland and Southern Ireland. Utterly misleading as such analogies always are, some approximation to a comparison may be attempted. Imagine a Celtic Wales—not Ireland—not bounded on the west by seas commanded by a British fleet, but divided only by a frontier-line from a nation of 70,000,000 Celts, bitterly hostile to England, using Wales as an instrument against England, enlisting every newspaper within its borders in a campaign of vituperative misrepresentation of every article of English policy; imagine that, and ask then whether an England to which sovereignty and self-defence meant anything could grant Wales an independence which gave her control of police and frontiers and constituted her in fact an advance-guard of the greater Wales beyond. For that is broadly what independence on the Irish model would mean.

That demand may be simply a bargaining-counter. At least the cantonal proposal has not been rejected as these words are written. A settlement may conceivably be arrived at on that basis, for by it the Czechs have assuredly conceded enough to enable Herr Hitler in his coming speech at Nuremberg to claim a bloodless victory. The Nazi Congress, indeed, may well be the decisive factor. The Führer cannot afford to admit a check. Either he must accept a settlement and hail it as a triumph, or he must launch his country on an adventure so desperate as to threaten himself and his whole

régime with ruin. Czechoslovakia, of course, could never survive a German attack unaided, but she is no mean adversary none the less, and with the pledged support of France and Russia, and the almost inevitable implication of Britain in the conflict, she would become the centre of a European War in which her territory—and first and foremost the territory of the Sudetendeutsch—would be ravaged and her cities destroyed, but the defeat of the assailant would be certain. The consequences for Europe of such a conflict would be appalling beyond all imagination. Herr Hitler is capable of imagining something of what they would be for Germany. In that lies the continent's chief hope. The fear of German aggression has called into being in resistance to it a defensive front of three Great Powers. If their firmness turns the scale Lord Halifax might perhaps reflect on the fact as he travels to Geneva this month, for those Powers will have achieved security through collective action by precisely the methods of the League.

Why, it may with reason be asked, could that not have been achieved through the League itself? The advantages would have been obvious. If the three Great Powers had been working together at Geneva in full harmony for a common purpose, and a purpose not merely consonant with, but actually enjoined by, the Covenant, they would unquestionably have secured the support of many, perhaps of all, the secondary States of Europe which still are members of the League. That would have been no negligible gain. There were, no doubt, arguments against that course. There was a desire to avoid precipitating a crisis such as the sudden convocation of the League Council might create. The despatch of Lord Runciman as mediator seemed a better way. It may have been. But if the present danger passes, and it becomes clear that the firmness and unity of three League Powers was the prime factor in preserving peace, then action at the coming Assembly for the rehabilitation of the League will be a natural and important sequel. Sir John Simon may have had something like that in mind when he paid pointed tribute at Lanark to the League ideal.

GERMANY'S NEXT MOVE

THREE questions need to be asked regarding Herr Hitler's speech at Nuremberg—what he said, why he said it, and what light it throws on his future policy. What he said is on record. He said that

conditions in Czechoslovakia are intolerable; which is untrue. He said that the Sudeten Germans had been deliberately ruined economically and then handed over to slow extermination; which is untrue. He said the Sudeten Germans were being oppressed inhumanly and unbearably; which is untrue. He made other statements equally baseless about the treatment of the Sudeten Germans; he demanded for them more than once the right of self-determination, but at the same time he declared it was for the Czechoslovak Government to discuss the situation with the Sudeten Germans with a view to reaching an understanding—which is precisely what that Government has been doing on the rare occasions when the Sudeten Germans have not refused discussion on the ground of some affray in a provincial centre. The speech was a naked, if indeterminate, threat of the use of force in certain contingencies which may all too easily occur. If it leaves the outlook no worse than before it would be idle to imagine that it leaves it any better.

As to why Herr Hitler used the language he saw fit to use, two explanations offer. The occasion and the environment demanded violence. Reuter's correspondent, telegraphing on the morning of the speech, observed significantly, "The atmosphere in Nuremberg has become so wild during the last thirty-six hours that it has ceased to represent the voice of the nation or that of the Governmental world." Violent language no doubt seemed requisite on another ground. Herr Hitler, apart from a general threat, said nothing definite; he did not even demand a plebiscite, though he broadly hinted at it. In the atmosphere prevailing it was essential to satisfy the demand for sensation by the form, if it could not be satisfied by the content, of the speech. And no one can complain that the Führer fell short of his hearers' expectations there.

But what does it all mean? Is there a settled policy in Herr Hitler's mind? Is he waiting for such an excuse as the repeated conflicts in the Sudeten area provide to march in and establish order as he established it in Austria? And is he bent on that in the full knowledge that such an act would bring Britain, France and Russia into the field against him? The answers to those questions can only be given by time, but there are many ominous indications to suggest an affirmative answer to all of them. What is certain is that the lot of the Sudetendeutsch is a completely secondary factor. What the Nazi Party wants is not Sudeten freedom—there would be far less of that after transference to Nazi rule—but Sudeten territory. Let Germany have that and she has the whole of the elaborate fortifica-

tions which the Czechs have been constructing for twenty years on their mountain frontier; she has the Skoda munition works at Pilsen (though much of that great enterprise has been moved to the east) under her guns; in other words she has what would be left of Czechoslovakia at her mercy. That is why a plebiscite, specious though such an expedient could be made to seem, would be suicide for Czechoslovakia. No plebiscite is necessary to confer on any Sudeten German the right to live under German rule. He can cross the frontier tomorrow if he chooses, and unlike emigrants from Germany take every penny of his property with him. If Germany wants the Sudetendeutsch she has only to invite them in. What she wants, in fact, is the land they live on.

That is the essence of the situation. Under the last Czech plan the Sudeten Germans have been given far more than Herr Henlein asked for when he was in London early this year, far more than was ever asked for till the seizure of Austria gave Germany a stranglehold on Czechoslovakia and argument based on force ousted argument based on reason. If the desire of the Sudeten Germans is to live free lives with their families, speaking their German language, sending their children to German schools, worshipping in German Churches, voting freely for the candidates of their choice in local Councils and the national Parliament, all that and much more is conceded by the latest Czech proposals. The great majority of such rights—for rights they are, not privileges—they have long enjoyed. Acceptance of the so-called "fourth plan" would give them full control of their destinies within the framework of the Czechoslovak State, which they have frequently said they have no desire to leave.

But that does not satisfy Herr Hitler. He has a million and a half men under arms today, and until the German army returns to its normal peace-time level the situation will remain charged with the gravest possibilities. The state of tension created by the Nuremberg demonstrations and events preceding them is fast becoming unendurable. A little more and the guns will go off of their own accord. Yet, in fact, that is precisely what does not happen. A war is the consequence, not of fate, but of conscious human volition, and till fighting actually begins the volition of the man or nation tempted to give the fatal order can still be changed. Herr Hitler may be a gambler, but there are some odds he will not face; the danger is that he may still misjudge the effects a breach of the peace of Europe must infallibly have. That danger will be the greater the more the undisputed initiative is left in his hands, and Powers like Britain and France think only of countering his strokes as he makes them. They

have, to be just, taken some initiative themselves. The Runciman Mission was proposed by the British Government, and its appointment has been justified abundantly. But for its mediatory work discussions between the Czechs and the Sudeten Germans would have broken down long ago. But it is no part of Lord Runciman's task to fight influences from outside, and he has no power to do that.

The new situation must be faced with new resources. Not many new resources are available, but one obvious step should be taken and taken quickly. If Czechoslovakia is attacked by Germany, Russia and France are pledged to defend her, and we have engaged, in all but a binding contract, to stand by France. With France we are maintaining contact of every kind. With Russia, which alone is capable of giving Czechoslovakia immediate help in case of need, we have no visible contact at all apart from normal diplomatic relations. That is on the face of it gratuitous unwisdom. There is, no doubt, some prejudice against Russia in this country, and quite intelligibly. Much that has happened inside that country since the 1917 Revolution revolts all decent people. But Russia in her foreign relations since 1920 has had as good a record as any country in Europe. She has committed no aggression and threatened none. The small republics of Estonia and Latvia which secured independence of her at the Peace Conference have at no time felt serious apprehension of her. Russia today does not threaten Germany; nor does France; nor, least of all, do we. No one dreams of a policy of encirclement. But all are deeply concerned in the independence and integrity of Czechoslovakia. So equally are countries like Poland and Rumania. The Foreign Ministers of Russia and Rumania are at Geneva. The Foreign Ministers of France and Poland are expected there. Difficult as it manifestly is for Lord Halifax to leave London at this moment, it is hard to imagine a more fruitful application of his talents than immediate consultation with the representatives of the four States so vitally concerned in the maintenance of the peace of Europe.

WHAT HITLER'S VICTORY MEANS

So Herr von Ribbentrop was right. Herr von Ribbentrop assured Herr Hitler that Great Britain did not mean business. The British Government had been ceaselessly insisting that it did. The Prime Minister had sounded a warning to that effect as long ago as March.

More recently it had been assiduously repeated. Sir John Simon was put up to repeat it last month at Lanark, in a speech better equipped with provisos and conditions than plain men noticed at the time. Germany having still strangely failed to realise that Britain meant business, an official communiqué, which gave complete satisfaction in Paris and Prague, was issued from Downing Street a fortnight later, emphasising the significance of the warning which Mr. Chamberlain had uttered in March and Sir John Simon had repeated in August. Germany being still unaccountably sceptical, urgent instructions were sent to the British Ambassador in Berlin to impress on any of Herr Hitler's entourage whom he could reach on the eve of the Führer's Nuremberg speech how unmistakably Britain meant business. Meanwhile M. Bonnet in Paris and M. Litvinoff in Moscow were assuring the Czechs about once a week that France and Russia would carry out their engagements. In spite of all Herr Hitler apparently gave ear to his Foreign Minister, and in his speech to the Nuremberg Congress roundly demanded "self-determination" for the Sudetendeutsch. And now Mr. Chamberlain, having visited Herr Hitler at Berchtesgaden, announces that as the result of their conversation he and Herr Hitler fully understand what was in each other's minds,—implying logically that Herr Hitler appreciates at last that Britain means business. Does he?

What, meanwhile, had been happening in Czechoslovakia? The Runciman mission had been dispatched to Czechoslovakia at the instance of the British Government, and after various proposals by Dr. Hodza and his colleagues had been rejected, a "Fourth Plan" was put forward which both Lord Runciman and the British Government were understood to approve as just and generous. But, as is now plain enough, no plan which failed to give Czechoslovakian territory to Germany could hope to satisfy Herr Hitler, by whom every move of the Sudetendeutsch was dictated, and in his Nuremberg speech he gave the plan the *coup de grâce* by demanding self-determination. The speech was the signal for concerted risings by the Sudeten Germans, and a critical situation was immediately created, the insurgents obviously expecting the German army to march in. It did not march in, the Czech gendarmerie and troops established complete control, and since then, apart from a few frontier incidents initiated from Germany, the country has been completely quiet. It was at that moment, with internal peace restored throughout the country, that Dr. Benes was informed that Mr. Chamberlain had been talking to Herr Hitler, that French and British Ministers had been in conclave, and that as a result it was decided

that—in view of Herr Hitler's requirements—Czechoslovakia was to hand over an undetermined tract of territory and perhaps two million of her citizens to German rule.

In seeking an explanation of a decision which a week ago not a man in any continent would have thought credible let us spare ourselves at least the indecency of hypocrisy. *The Times* on Tuesday expressed satisfaction, in connexion with the new plan for Czechoslovakia, that "the proposed modifications of the peace treaties, if they were now carried through with general consent, would illustrate and strengthen the principle of change achieved without violence." Indubitably. Why violence, when the mere threat of it suffices? Is there a man in any continent—except the writer of *The Times* article—who does not know that if Czechoslovakia abandons a plan of settlement which all the world outside Germany and Italy has acclaimed as just, it is under the threat of ruthless violence, to which three Great Powers to which she looked with reason for support have already yielded? Britain, France and Russia are not prepared to go to war in resistance to Germany's resolute, systematic, undiverging eastward march. And so it comes that Dr. Benes receives his ultimatum not from Herr Hitler after all, but from Mr. Chamberlain and M. Daladier—acting under the law of agency.

This does not necessarily mean that the three Powers were wrong in refusing to take up arms when Herr Hitler threatened an attack on Czechoslovakia. What king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? If Britain and France doubted whether even with the help of Russia they could give effective support to Czechoslovakia, their inaction is intelligible, though their conclusion is surprising; but it is tragic that the discovery that they could not help Czechoslovakia was only made when they had led the Czechs (and all the world) to believe they could. Some pertinent words used by Sir Edward Grey of the situation in the last days of July, 1914, are worth recalling in this connexion. "One danger," he wrote,¹ "I saw so hideous that it must be avoided and guarded against at every word. It was that France and Russia might face the ordeal of war with Germany, relying upon our support; that this support might not be forthcoming, and that we might then, when it was too late, be held responsible by them for having let them in for a disastrous war." For France and Russia read Czechoslovakia, and consider the quotation in the setting of today.

¹ *Twenty-Five Years*, i. 313.

We have as yet no explanation of the catastrophic change that followed the Berchtesgaden visit. Nor have we so far official details of the proposal sent to Prague, though unofficial descriptions of it tally so closely that they must be substantially correct. They arouse profound misgiving. There is, it would appear, to be no plebiscite in Sudetendeutschland. Parts of the area are to be sheared off without even that formality—which is as well, for no plebiscite could yield results in which justice or equity played any part. But the same must be said of the method which it is said is to be favoured now. Those regions of Czechoslovakia are to go to Germany in which a certain (so far undetermined, or at any rate undisclosed) percentage of votes was obtained by Sudeten Germans in the municipal and communal elections of May of this year. Nothing could be more grossly and palpably unfair. What relation has a vote on local urban and rural administration to a vote on partition of a country, even if the voting on local matters was mainly on racial lines? And, so far as the voting was racial, it was voting under terrorism. Who, moreover, is to interpret the voting, and on what principle? Are strategical, economic or industrial considerations to be given any weight? Or density of population? The findings of any commission must be contentious to the last degree,—but no doubt Herr Hitler will get what territory he wants.

One proposal so cynical that it challenges credence is said to have been put forward. What is left of Czechoslovakia after Germany, Hungary and Poland have satisfied their desires on her—for while the wolf gnaws the jackals intend to nibble—is to be protected by an international guarantee in which, it would appear, Britain, Germany, Italy and France are to join. Czechoslovakia guaranteed by Herr Hitler! Czechoslovakia guaranteed by Signor Mussolini! Czechoslovakia guaranteed by a France which has defaulted on her obligations in face of the very contingency they were meant to meet. Even about a guarantee by Britain Czechoslovakia may legitimately, in present circumstances, hold opinions which she might be too courteous to express. In any case there are compelling reasons why this country should give no such guarantee. If the present deal goes through Great Britain will have closed the door of south-eastern Europe against herself. Herr Hitler has marked it out for his province, and if he cannot be checked by Great Britain, France, Russia and Czechoslovakia combined, it is certain he will not be checked at all. The Government knows the possibilities of the present situation. It has been able to judge how much reliance can be placed on France and Russia, and for the moment we must, in

the absence of information which the Government is unable to impart, accept its declaration that no other course than has been taken was possible. But if that is so, no circumstances can be imagined in which resistance to German hegemony over south-eastern Europe could be considered.

Incalculable consequences will flow from that momentous two-hour talk at Berchtesgaden. Opinion in this country will be—indeed already is—split in two, and by no means only on Party lines. Opinion in France will be split as fundamentally. Relations between Britain and France will suffer a serious strain, for each will tend to lay the blame for what has happened on the other, when they are not both of them laying it on Russia. Russia herself, enabled for her own purposes to dilate on the defection of the democracies, will cease to consider co-operation with them in resistance to German aggrandisement; she is more likely, after an interval, to consider a deal with Germany, profitable to both. The United States will be driven back into the isolation from which it was beginning to emerge. In Germany Herr Hitler's prestige, which was showing some signs of waning, is triumphantly re-established. As for the League of Nations, in face of what may be the final and decisive example of the break-down of collective security and the naked triumph of force, it seems likely to be reduced to a registration office. Not all these consequences are certain, but most of them are probable. The Government may have foreseen them all, and decided that for reasons not yet disclosed the price must be paid. On that we await further knowledge, and the assignment of responsibility. Meanwhile, let there be no illusion as to what Herr Hitler's victory means.

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Eleventh-hour news has provided irrefragable demonstration of what it means. Czechoslovakia, in the face of "irresistible pressure" exerted by the French and British Governments, has accepted the terms dictated to her. As these words are being written Mr. Chamberlain is on his way to Godesberg on the Rhine to ascertain whether Herr Hitler is now content. He well may not be. The procedure of demands under menace has proved so unqualified a success that it would be surprising if the Führer chose this moment to abandon it. Under his leadership Nazi Germany was resolved to bring Czechoslovakia, as she brought Austria, under her domination, and by the same methods, with the exception that in this case she has not needed to move a man across a frontier, since in this case Czechoslovakia had friends influential enough to guarantee her subjection.

It has taken place. Nothing could be more moving than the broadcast proclamation in which the surrender of Czechoslovakia was announced to the people on Wednesday, with its closing injunction, "You shall today level no reproaches at those who have forsaken us in our hour of direst need. History will pass judgement on the events of these last days."

History will pass judgement. But some judgements must be formed forthwith, for action depends on them, and action, in some direction or another, cannot be deferred. The result of Mr. Chamberlain's visit to Godesberg must no doubt be awaited, but nothing that may be decided there can alter what was decided at Berchtesgaden. On that opinion in this country is beginning to find its voice. Both Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden have given expression to it already. Each spoke with the gravest apprehension of the situation. "Acceptance of Herr Hitler's terms involves the prostration of Europe before the Nazi power, of which the fullest advantage will certainly be taken," said Mr. Churchill. Mr. Eden used language less forcible but similar, urging that a stand be made before it is too late. The implication is that a stand could still be made. In the face of the demoralisation the past seven days have wrought that may well be questioned.

The country is still dazed by what has happened. The fate of Czechoslovakia was decided without the knowledge of Parliament in Britain or France and without consultation with Czechoslovakia itself. Which of Czechoslovakia's friends was it that weakened first? It was on France that the combination pivoted. France was bound by treaty to defend Czechoslovakia against external attack. Russia was pledged to defend her only if France acted. We were not pledged to Czechoslovakia at all (unless the League Covenant is still held valid), but we undertook repeatedly to defend the integrity of France if it was jeopardised by French action in support of Czechoslovakia. Did France decide she could not carry out her obligations, thus leaving Russia and Britain uncommitted? M. Litvinoff declared unequivocally at Geneva that Russia had been prepared throughout to do her part, and had told both France and Czechoslovakia so. Was it that London and Paris shrank from the appalling sacrifice of everything worth preserving that a new conflict with Germany would involve? No one would judge them harshly for that, but that was not the note the Government or people of France or Britain was sounding ten days ago. History will judge when it has the facts, but the facts themselves are not available yet. It must be Parliament's first business to elicit them.

A RESPITE AND AFTER

A WORLD that was slipping over the edge of the abyss has been caught back and held temporarily poised. That is as much as can be said with justification at this moment, but at least there is a respite, and the alternative to respite would be war. A Four-Power conference is not in itself an improvisation to be greatly welcomed, for a regard for the interests of the absent is rarely conspicuous in such cases. Three Great Powers were mentioned in the latest British official communiqué as pledged to the support of Czechoslovakia, and only two of them were invited to Munich on Thursday. (An omission even more regrettable is the absence of Czechoslovakia. It is unfortunate on many grounds that no attempt should have been made at any time to arrange some contact between Mr. Chamberlain and Dr. Benes.) But it was no doubt a choice between a Four-Power conference and no conference, and since a Four-Power conference was calculated to postpone war, and might avert it altogether, there could be no hesitation. But let it not be forgotten that Russia's help may still be needed; it is a good deal to hope for if she is excluded from discussion and only called in to fight. That, however, can be considered at a later stage. What the world must pray is that the Four-Power talk may achieve the work immediately before it and secure the settlement of the Sudeten German question by negotiation instead of war. If war can be averted for the moment—and without imposing new and unjust sacrifices on Czechoslovakia—the further task of securing and maintaining peace may be faced in a less fevered atmosphere.

The outcome of the Munich talks may be known before these words are read. The advantage with which they start is that the participants include three men who want peace—for there is no doubt about Signor Mussolini's views on that point—and only one, who, on his own confession to Mr. Chamberlain, was ready to risk world war to secure a frontier rectification in September instead of in October. That advantage may seem on the face of it to be small, for the man who is capable of conducting negotiations on the lines described in the appalling account given by Mr. Chamberlain to the House of Commons is obviously capable of any attitude in any company. But even in Germany world opinion cannot be altogether negligible. Even into Germany, despite all the efforts of Dr. Goebbels and Herr Himmler, some knowledge of vital facts must gradually penetrate. And if Germany, which in its essence is mis-

represented, not represented, by the Nazi hotheads, learns at last what slaughter of its sons Herr Hitler irresponsibly contemplated because his own scant stock of patience was running out, even Germany may find a way to prevent its Führer from plunging its 70 millions into war.

For the rest of the world the impression that to negotiate with Herr Hitler is to negotiate with a man emancipated from all ordinary obligations of honour, decency or even sanity is abundantly confirmed. There is an unimpeachable witness to that—Mr. Chamberlain. For it is to the Prime Minister himself that we owe the knowledge that Herr Hitler was ready to risk a world war for a map and a date—"he declared categorically that rather than wait he would be prepared to risk a world war"—and that when the Anglo-French plan had been forced on Czechoslovakia by Britain and France as the result of the conversation at Berchtesgaden it was repudiated at Godesberg a week later, on the ground that when Herr Hitler had asked the British Government to agree to the principle of self-determination for the Sudetendeutsch he had never believed that Government would accept it.

How far, even in a Four-Power conference, negotiation with a national leader endowed with such mentality is possible only events can prove. The Prime Minister, in his studiously restrained and objective narrative in the House of Commons, was compelled to mention that at Berchtesgaden he had observed to Herr Hitler that since a German attack on Czechoslovakia was already decided on it was hard to see why he, the Prime Minister, had been encouraged to come to Germany at all; and that when he reached Godesberg he experienced a profound shock at finding how completely Herr Hitler disowned the proposals he had himself put forward a week before. Mr. Chamberlain is not the first person to receive shocks at Herr Hitler's hands. The French received one when Herr Hitler specifically declared in May, 1935, that he would observe the Locarno obligations regarding the demilitarisation of the Rhineland, and marched his troops into the Rhineland in March, 1936. Dr. Schuschnigg received one when Herr Hitler repeatedly assured him that he would respect the independence of Austria, and then occupied Austria with his Secret Police and army. Dr. Benes received one when the explicit assurances of General Goering, given after the seizure of Austria, presumably not without Herr Hitler's approval, that Germany had no hostile intentions against Czechoslovakia were followed sixteen days later by a declaration by Herr Hitler that all Germans in Europe should be united in the Reich, and subsequently

by the acts that confront the world today. Such shocks make negotiation with Herr Hitler difficult.

But an attempt at further negotiation was essential, and unstinted recognition is due to Mr. Chamberlain for his almost superhuman efforts to save the world from a tragedy without parallel. He overstated the truth by not one syllable when in his broadcast speech he claimed in simple and moving words that he had done everything for peace that one man could do. He might say more; more at any rate might be said for him; he has exceeded all that it seemed possible physically or mentally for one man to do, and if, as is almost certainly the case, he was right in saying that but for his first visit to Herr Hitler Czechoslovakia would have been invaded, the world's debt to him may yet be measured in millions of human beings saved instead of slaughtered. Solutions, notably that embodied in the Anglo-French proposals, were forced on him, which he accepted not because they were good, but because they were better than war. The story of the circumstances in which the adoption of that solution seemed essential has only just been told. The proposals themselves have been widely criticised as consistent neither with reason nor with justice. That criticism stands, but it must be subordinated to the larger considerations which the Prime Minister so impressively laid before the House of Commons. What effect that speech will have on the world can be imagined. Its effect, if it could be circulated in Germany, might be revolutionary. That will not happen, but it can hardly be believed that nothing of the truth will percolate.

With the new Munich conference immediately impending, we can permit ourselves no more than a severely chastened optimism. Hope, as the Prime Minister said in his broadcast speech, cannot be extinguished till the first shot has been fired. But that shot, with its infinite and awful reverberations, may have echoed through the world almost before these lines are read. Herr Hitler has consented only to postpone his mobilisation for twenty-four hours—and to hold conference with the Prime Ministers of Britain, France and Italy. If his mood at Munich is that of Berchtesgaden and Godesberg this country and others will need their trenches and gas-masks still. And his answer to President Roosevelt's first appeal reveals little sign of change. It is no time yet to slacken defensive preparations. War has been postponed, and an interval is offered in which sanity and reason can replace violence and menace. That interval may be used not only to remove fears of the threatened war, but to lay new foundations on which enduring peace may rest. But that is to look

far ahead. Meanwhile let tribute be paid where it is due. Two men have in these past days done everything humanly possible to save peace, Mr. Chamberlain and Dr. Benes. It lies with one man to shatter it—and his intentions are still in doubt.

THE PRICE OF PEACE

It is a bewildering world. On Wednesday of last week, September 29th, the Prime Minister told the House of Commons how during his talk with Herr Hitler at Godesberg the latter had declared categorically that rather than wait beyond the arbitrary date he had chosen to fix for the annexation of Sudetendeutschland he would risk a world war; that he himself experienced a profound shock on discovering at Godesberg how completely Herr Hitler had thrown over the proposals he was understood to have accepted at Berchtesgaden the week before; and with a studied economy of language he confessed that he found Herr Hitler "unreasonable." On the Friday, just forty-eight hours later, he read to the assembled crowd that welcomed him at Heston a document in which Britain and Germany, which under the Briand-Kellogg Pact had pledged themselves not to go to war with anyone, now pledged themselves not to go to war with one another, and on the strength of that expressed to the still larger crowd which awaited him in Downing Street the belief that "peace in our time" had been achieved. If that is so, Lord Halifax's language regarding "the miracle of Munich" is no whit too strong.

May it be so, indeed. There is no one who does not desire from the depth of his soul to believe that the Prime Minister is right. But nothing is more dangerous than to shape our beliefs in accordance with our desires, and nothing more perverse than to take the line which is being taken in many quarters, that to entertain misgivings regarding the Munich decisions is tantamount to depreciating the tireless and self-sacrificing efforts exerted by the Prime Minister for the maintenance of peace. It was said here last week, and it ought to be unnecessary to repeat it, that the Prime Minister did everything any man could conceivably do to avert war—and he did avert it. It may well be held that nothing mattered in comparison with that; that a modern European war would have destroyed everything in Europe that makes life worth living; and that Czechoslovakia itself would have been the first sufferer and the worst. No

part of that argument need be challenged. What must be challenged is the levity which assumes that to have averted war is to have averted all serious cause for apprehension. The Prime Minister is under no such illusion, or he would not have supplemented his declaration of belief in peace in our time with insistence that there can be no relaxation of our re-armament efforts. All he did, and all he could do, at Munich, was to choose the less disastrous of the two disastrous courses open to him, and anyone does him an ill service who pretends otherwise. Whether that choice need ever have been forced on him if events in the preceding weeks had been handled differently—if, for example, the policy advocated by Mr. Duff Cooper in his resignation speech had been adopted—cannot be argued here. We are concerned with the situation facing us today.

In casting up the balance-sheet let the hopeful elements come first. War, to begin with, has been averted. The value of that is incalculable; to it, indeed, in some quarters where the doctrine of peace at any price is not habitually favoured, every other consideration seems subordinate. And though war may only be postponed, and that not for long, and will, if it comes, be engaged in by this country in conditions much less favourable than existed ten days ago,¹ yet the fact remains that while there is no war there is always still the chance of preserving peace. Secondly, in this case, almost for the first time, Herr Hitler has failed to achieve the full hundred per cent. of his desires. To compare the Anglo-French proposals of September 18th, the Godesberg ultimatum of the 23rd and the Munich agreement of the 30th in detail would be needless labour. Broadly, the Munich agreement was a reversion to the Anglo-French proposals—but it must be remembered that those proposals when they were first published shocked the conscience of the world, and it is only by comparison with the utterly outrageous Godesberg demands that they can be considered to approximate either to justice or to expediency. Nevertheless Herr Hitler was at Munich driven back, or persuaded back, from Godesberg to Berchtesgaden. What the decisive factors were is a matter of speculation. It may have been Signor Mussolini's influence; it may have been the mobilisation of the British fleet; it may, as we desire most earnestly to believe, have been a new revelation of the German people's hatred, and the whole world's hatred, of war. No doubt all three factors operated. If the third has really impressed Herr Hitler the outlook for the future may be less sombre than it seems.

For it looks black enough when the other side of the balance-sheet

¹ Because Czechoslovakia's Maginot Line will have passed into German hands.

is scanned. If Herr Hitler has not achieved 100 per cent. of his desires, he has achieved much more than 90. The procedure has been varied, but the result will be substantially the same. Czechoslovakia suffers not only mutilation but also grave injustice. There seems to have been no conception at Munich of the fact that a State must have frontiers that enable it to live, and that racial desires have to be weighed in a common balance with strategic, economic and transport considerations before a just conclusion can be reached. Czechoslovakia is to be carved up on purely racial grounds and on utterly unfair principles, for a million Sudeten Germans—Socialists, Catholics, Jews and others—to whom the idea of transference to German rule is sheer terror, are apparently to be counted in with the Henleinists to form the 50 per cent. German majority which is sufficient to bring a given area under German sovereignty. The economic situation of the truncated Czechoslovakia, when Poland and Hungary, the latter assiduously instigated by Signor Mussolini, have secured their share, may well be such as to involve the complete breakdown of government. In any case what is left of Czechoslovakia must inevitably fall defenceless under German hegemony.

So must much more of South-Eastern Europe. Herr Hitler's programme is being carried through point by point with relentless precision—and carried through by naked menace. Astonishing talk has been current about a settlement by agreement instead of force. There has been agreement for one reason and one alone, that the threat of force was so potent that actual resort to force became unnecessary. It is an insult to Mr. Chamberlain to suggest that he would have accepted on any other ground the terms he did accept. What Herr Hitler has gained by the threat of force has made the force at his disposal much greater still. The fear of being opposed by Britain, France, Czechoslovakia and Russia is dispelled. Poland is swinging visibly into the German orbit. Czechoslovakia, without her fortifications and her mountain frontier, is powerless. Russia, left out of every vital consultation by Britain and France, is likely to retain small interest in their future fortunes. And the German army will be swelled by the conscripts whom three million new citizens will yield. Never since the days of Napoleon has any Power held such predominance in Europe. And enough is known of German trade policy to make it certain that our share of European markets from the Rhine to Constantinople will steadily, perhaps rapidly, diminish. The effect of that on employment, and even on social order, in this country can only be contemplated with deep concern.

These are the plain and reasonable deductions from the facts that face us. But they are, of course, not certainties. Those may be right who have held that once Germany had secured Austria and what she wanted of Czechoslovakia she would have reached satiation-point and would even be prepared to discuss disarmament. The Prime Minister evidently entertains some such belief, though it must be based on a rather comprehensive oblivion of what, on his own testimony, happened last month at Berchtesgaden and Godesberg. But a Four-Power concert, from which Russia and all lesser States are excluded, holds out no hope of stability or peace for Europe. There is no case at present for the general conference proposed by Mr. Attlee; we have had too much experience of general conferences called to satisfy vague aspirations; but the principle that all States should take their part in discussions that may affect their destinies is fundamental, deplorably though it has been disregarded in the case of Czechoslovakia. Meanwhile the whole of British foreign policy must be reconsidered, and may have to be reshaped radically. We can be under no illusion as to the effects of the last ten days on our position and prestige.

Federal Union

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

THERE is no question about the hold the idea of federal union has taken on certain sections of opinion in this country, particularly that all-important section, youth. That is not surprising. The disease of the world is so desperate that any remedy for which colourable claims can be made will inevitably attract support. It was the same thing in the last war. Then the remedy was a League of Nations. Today it is Federal Union. That minds should be concentrated on the one or the other, or both, is clearly all to the good. Youth, especially, to whom it will largely fall to build and maintain whatever new world emerges from this turmoil, should be canvassing, as it is canvassing, any plan that yields hope of saving the next generation from the disasters that are falling on this. Federal Union may meet the need completely or in part, or not at all. That will only be discovered if the intelligence, rather than the emotions, is brought to bear on it. So far a good deal of the advocacy of it has been marked by more enthusiasm than insight, just as some of the criticism of it has been marked by more acerbity than acumen. The case for and against Federal Union needs more dispassionate examination.

The first question to ask is, What is Federal Union? That is not so easily answered as might appear, for the various proposals figuring under that general title differ considerably. But since it was to the publication of Mr. Clarence Streit's *Union Now* last autumn that the existing Federal Union movement mainly owed its inception an outline of the plan presented in that work is the necessary starting-point, even though many British supporters of Federal Union are at some pains to explain that they do not mean by it what Mr. Streit means.

Mr. Streit proposes a "union" of fifteen democratic States, with a total population of some 300,000,000. The word union must be emphasised. By contrast with a "League" of nations, which indicates a society of sovereign States co-operating for certain defined purposes, a union is an integral body in which the several States merge their independence within a specified field, definitely and deliberately sacrificing their national sovereignty to that extent. The Assembly or Council, or whatever the bodies that govern the

union may be, will be elected by the 300,000,000 inhabitants of the fifteen constituent States (or such of them as have the required qualifications) by direct individual vote, not appointed by the Governments of the several States. That is fundamental to the plan. The voters will elect a central Union Government, to which, so far as the subjects entrusted to it are concerned, the individual Governments will be definitely subordinate, or have no status at all. Such subjects, foreign affairs, armaments, currency and the rest, pass out of their hands.

What are the constituent States to be, and what powers are to be entrusted to the Union? The first question is not of capital importance, for there is nothing at all sacrosanct about Mr. Streit's particular list. One inclusion, indeed, that of the United States, obviously represents hope very much more than faith. The fourteen other members of Mr. Streit's union are Great Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Ireland, France, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland. These States—or rather the individual citizens of each—are to elect a legislature of two chambers, a House of Deputies and a Senate, on the basis of population. To the House of Deputies, out of a total of 540 members, the United States would send 252 members, and New Zealand three, the other States coming intermediately according to their size, Great Britain, for example, having 93 members, France 84, and Canada (the next largest) 21. In the Senate each State would have two members as basis, plus a certain number more determined by population. Thus, out of a Senate of 40, the United States would have eight members, Britain and France four each, and everyone else two.

Both the constitution of the whole Union and the composition and election of its legislature are highly debatable questions, and Mr. Streit's scheme is unlikely to find many defenders as it stands. More important, because the essential feature of all schemes, is the extent of the powers to be surrendered by the constituent States and transferred to the Union Government. According to Mr. Streit the Union will have its own military, naval and air forces, and the constituent States none apart from local police; its own common currency; full power to regulate trade and all communications, including postal service, between its constituent States; and a Supreme Court, to decide all questions arising under the Constitution and the laws made by it. These laws, it is to be noted, are to be directly binding on the individual citizens of the constituent States, not on their Governments.

Mr. Streit's plan includes more than this, but there is no need to pursue it further, since it is clearly more important to fix attention on the proposals being advocated by responsible supporters of Federal Union in this country. Chief of these is the body known simply (and a little confusingly) as Federal Union, which has done a considerable service by stating its aims in language that is both clear and concise. Federal Union, according to "Federal Union," stands for a great commonwealth of free nations which are prepared to transfer to a common Government the management of foreign policy, arms and armed forces, international trade and finance and colonies, with guarantees for the native inhabitants. "Any nation could join, including, for instance, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., and each could keep its own form of government, provided it guaranteed civil liberties and transferred its right to make laws on the subjects mentioned above to the commonwealth Government."

This must be regarded as the most authoritative exposition of Federal Union current in this country, in so far as it emanates from the one body created to advocate the Federal Union principle. Modifications in detail have been advanced, and will no doubt continue to be advanced, by various individuals and societies. Of these only one calls at all imperatively for mention here. That is derived from a collation of two pamphlets, one by Sir John Fischer Williams and one by Sir William Beveridge, recently prepared (together with two others criticising the whole idea of federal union as a practical proposition) under the auspices of Chatham House. The value of the two studies is that between them they considerably limit the scope of the proposed Federal Union, which might commend it to some at least of those who think anything like Mr. Streit's scheme altogether too ambitious to be practicable.

Sir John Fischer Williams limits Federal Union in scope, Sir William Beveridge limits it in area. Sir John, indeed, writing as a jurist, is concerned chiefly to explain how Federal Union could work if it were decided to make the experiment at all. His plan will conciliate many sympathies that would otherwise be alienated, in that it makes provision for the retention of individual membership of the League of Nations by the States comprising the Union, not for one corporate membership. As to the scope of the Union itself "foreign policy, armed forces and the finance necessary for those two departments of State must be under federal control. This is the irreducible minimum of those common affairs which must be directed and managed by the federal authority if the unity of the Union is to be a reality." (Sir John, it should be emphasised, does not

urge that Federal Union should necessarily be confined to this minimum.)

Sir William Beveridge limits his scheme territorially. He rules out decisively the idea of a world federation, and insists (unlike "Federal Union") that the desired Union must consist of effective democracies. His constituent States are Britain, France, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland and Eire, together with the four British Dominions, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa. These have a total population of 235,000,000. The question of the inclusion of Poland and Czechoslovakia must be deferred till after the War. The inclusion of Germany depends *ex hypothesi* on her reverting to a democratic form of government. A combination of Sir William's limitations with Sir John's is on the face of it perfectly practicable.

This summarisation of existing federal schemes may seem tedious, but if Federal Union is to be discussed to any purpose it is necessary to start with some concrete idea of the form or forms Federal Union may take. The ground is now clear for examination of the arguments for and against Federal Union generally.

SOME CONCRETE CASES

FEDERAL UNION, as I understand it, is advocated on the ground that some effective international organisation, at least in Europe, after the War is the only alternative to prolonged anarchy; that the League of Nations has been tried and failed, largely because it accepted the principle of national sovereignty, which is necessarily evil and must be sharply curtailed; that a new organisation to which constituent States surrender a large part of their sovereignty is the only hope; and that the example of such unions as the United States of America or the Swiss Confederation show how practical a proposition Federal Union is. The case is often put much higher. If I quote one or two examples of that it is not at all with the idea of discrediting the advocates of Federal Union, but simply that, by clearing away misconceptions, we may get a residuum of common ground on which serious persons may base convinced agreement or honest difference. I have just been reading the latest book (*Europe Must Unite*) by Count Coudenhove-Kalergi, whose enthusiasm for

the form of Federal Union he terms Pan-Europa I have always respected and admired. I read there in one place:

“The British Commonwealth has shown the way by organising one-quarter of the world and of humanity in a federal State.”

That might well be taken as a test declaration. If an organisation like that of the British Commonwealth is what is meant by Federal Union, then so far as I am concerned all the difficulties fall away and I can subscribe myself a Federal Unionist with no reserves.

But actually the British Commonwealth is the supreme illustration of what Federal Union, as I have so far understood it, is *not*. It has no written constitution (for the Statute of Westminster, so far from imposing bonds, destroys them); it owes allegiance to a common sovereign, but only so long as he reigns but does not rule; it has no central government; it has no common foreign policy; it has no Customs union; it has no common currency and no common budget; it has no common military, naval and air forces. It functions admirably on most occasions, but that, it must be recognised, is owing to community of history and tradition, and there could be no hope that mere sentiment would ever have the same binding force on the States of Europe that it has on the States of the British Commonwealth. An attempt to federate the Commonwealth would disrupt it finally.

That is one of Count Coudenhove-Kalergi's examples. Another is found in the statement, regarding the United States of America, that

“Forty-eight States have there bound themselves together in a federal system with a common foreign policy, a common military policy, a common economic policy and common leadership, while preserving the constitutional rights and freedom of each constituent State and each citizen.”

To that less exception can be taken. Federal Unionists naturally and legitimately lay stress on the success of the federal principle in the United States when advocating the adoption of Federal Union for Europe, or even a larger area. The argument, it is true, is often pressed much too far. It is pressed much too far by Mr. Streit when he suggests that *because* the thirteen American colonies decided to form a federation in 1788 it should be equally practicable for the fifteen democracies he enumerates to form a federation today. That kind of contention harms the cause of Federal Union more than it helps it. The thirteen colonies which fought the War of Independ-

ence, and realised after it that to survive they must become a unit, had a history totally different from the European States, or Mr. Streit's fifteen democracies, of today. Till they rebelled against Britain in 1776 they had never existed as sovereign States; they had a common allegiance, common origins, similar forms of government, common traditions (Magna Carta, Shakespeare and the English Bible were part of their common heritage), a common language, a common foreign policy—that of Great Britain. During the war they had also a common enemy, which was perhaps the most effective stimulus of all to union. And their total population was under 3,000,000.

The historic importance of the constitutional departure the framers of the American constitution made is immense, but there is no comparison worth drawing between the conditions they were dealing with and those existing in a Europe of between twenty and thirty States, differing fundamentally in language, in history, in the stage of their political development, in literacy, in civilisation, in political ambitions, in economic standards, and above all in ideas and outlook. It may be possible to weld this disparate mass into some sort of federal union, though I confess I doubt it, but on that problem the experience of the thirteen colonies in 1788 seems to me to have no bearing worth speaking of at all. As to the forty-eight States of which Count Coudenhove-Kalergi speaks, thirty-five of them stand quite outside the present problem. Once the thirteen States had formed a Union the Union was supreme. Their success in that was complete, so complete that they were able to lay it down that no other form of government should be set up anywhere between the Atlantic and Pacific, and that as those great unpeopled spaces were colonised, States should one by one be formed out of them and be accepted (as federated units—it was that or nothing) into the existing Union. And so it happened, till the last State, Arizona, was added to the Union in 1912. It was the first step, the step taken by the thirteen, that counted, just as it will be the first step, the formation of two or three or any number of States into a union that can be proved to work, that will count today. Subsequent accessions will follow of themselves.

But there is, of course, a sense in which the example of the United States has a very real relevance, as showing what the relation of the constituent States in a Federal Union to the central Union is. Switzerland can be, and often is, taken as another example, but it is well to remember that Switzerland began as an alliance (not union) of three cantons in 1291, and did not reach the federal stage (by

this time with twenty-two cantons) till 1848. Such measured progress as that towards Federal Union could disturb no one's sleep. But the United States is, in this country at any rate, the more familiar model, and to argue from that to a potential European Union is pertinent and instructive. The United States is a federal union in the fullest sense. The whole completely, and beneficially, dwarfs the parts. The several States are, of course, far more important as political entities than an English county or a French department, but since none of them ever had any independent existence worth considering (35 of them never, 13 of them for less than a dozen years a century and a half ago), the Union is everything. There is American (the word is necessary because there is no adjective corresponding to United States) citizenship, American patriotism, American—we must say nowadays—ideology. The fact of living in Ohio or Minnesota or Missouri is incidental. It is living in the United States that counts.

That suggests large questions. If we are to visualise a European Union analogous to the Union which has its seat of government at Washington, one of two consequences seem to follow. Either the central Government will be weak and ineffective, or the constituent parts—Great Britain, France, Sweden, Holland—will be reduced to the status of Ohio or Minnesota or Missouri. As an ultimate objective there may be something to be said for that—though I doubt it—but it can only come by gradual and ordered evolution if it is to come at all. That consideration may reduce to right proportions, but by no means disposes of, the analogy between the United States and a European or some other Federal Union. We cannot abandon lightly the hopes inspired by the spectacle of a territory as large as Europe, inhabited by 130,000,000 people, with no possibility of war within its borders except civil war, with no frontiers to cross, no customs-houses and no impediments to trade from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the Great Lakes to the Rio Grande. To emphasise the lamentable state of Europe compared with that would be waste of ink. In the economic field at least Europe must take the first step towards some kind of closer association or perish. With that aspect of the question, and on the question generally, Professor Lionel Robbins, who believes in the possibilities of Federal Union much more strongly than I do, will deal at this point. I hope we shall find we can go some way together, even if we part company in the end.

A EUROPEAN PROBLEM

By PROFESSOR LIONEL ROBBINS

THE problem of Federation, for me, is essentially a European problem. I do not believe in the practicability of Mr. Streit's federation of all the democracies. The project of a world federation, embracing not only Europe but also the vast populations of Asia and the New World, seems to me to be an impossible aspiration. I can conceive loose forms of association, such as a modified League of Nations, which might do something to minimise friction in the world at large. But, outside Europe, I am convinced that, for generations to come, the prospects of peace must depend on the goodwill and the power of the more strongly organised States.

Inside Europe, however, the situation appears to be different. Here, it seems to me, we are confronted with one of those historical crises in which extensive change is ultimately the sole alternative to chaos. The changes in the technique of war, the increase in the means of widespread destruction, have brought it about that the existence in close geographical propinquity of a multiplicity of independent States is no longer a workable arrangement. If war breaks out anywhere, it is liable to spread everywhere; and, in intervals of peace, the expense and dislocation of preparing for war are likely to be such as to frustrate all the benefits of scientific progress and to lead to a period of retrogression and decay. European civilisation cannot indefinitely survive conditions such as have prevailed since the rise of the Bismarckian Empire. Nor can the peace of the world at large be regarded as even moderately well assured until there is once more stability and order in Europe.

But, to secure this, something more than traditional techniques are necessary; and the innovations of recent times have not proved to be very reliable. When the Great War of 1914-18 was over, high hopes were based on the principle of collective security laid down in the Covenant of the League of Nations. In the League system, it was thought, there had been discovered a mechanism whereby we might have the best of both worlds, the shelter of an international peace system and the benefits of national self-government. These hopes have not been fulfilled; and today we have to ask whether we can continue to trust in those principles or whether we must not look to other solutions.

Now I know that there are many high authorities who hold that the breakdown of the League was due to what are called accidental

causes. If only America had not held aloof, if only the Foreign Offices of this or that country had not sabotaged the League or misconceived the appropriate method of using it, the history of our age might have been different. Next time, it is said, we can do better.

These arguments do not reassure me. I can easily conceive that, if the policy of England and France had been different, the present crisis might not have arisen. I can willingly concede that, *given knowledge and goodwill*, peace can be maintained within *any* international system—or even without any system at all. But this is surely to beg the fundamental question. If we could assume knowledge and goodwill everywhere, then we should not need to worry about institutions; any institution would be as good as another. It is because the constitution of the League is such that its working may easily be upset if knowledge and goodwill are lacking, that I cannot regard it as altogether an accident that we have got into our present muddle. Given the League Covenant as it is, or as it could conceivably be modified without infringing the principles of voluntary association and national sovereignty, the ill-will of one powerful State or group of States, playing on the confused counsels of the rest, can produce disturbances which endanger the whole edifice. Neither within States nor between States can the rule of law rest upon a wholly voluntary basis.

Exactly the same type of difficulty arises in the sphere of economic relations. It is the conclusion of everyone who has given serious attention to the subject, that the existence of barriers to trade and migration is a cause of grave economic dislocation and a perpetual irritant in international relations. Yet the failure of international conferences to produce any amelioration of this state of affairs is notorious. In the absence of central control within a national area, there would be no reason to expect that the towns and counties would not resort to anti-social economic policies—local *octrois*, local restrictions on movement—as they did in the Middle Ages. Similarly, in the absence of an international authority with overriding powers, there is no reason to suppose that Sovereign States will not resort to parallel practices. The idea that there can be a satisfactory economic reconstruction in Europe without an antecedent political reconstruction runs counter, not merely to all reasonable supposition, but also to the lessons of all recent experience. The economic problem is essentially political.

If this is so, it seems to follow that, to preserve the civilisation of Europe, the various peoples must enter a form of union more

permanent and more far-reaching in its powers than the confederate system of the League of Nations. The different States must surrender their right to make war and peace. They must surrender also the right to pursue economic policies which embarrass and impoverish their neighbours. I do not think that this need necessarily involve a slavish imitation of the constitutions of existing federations. I attach considerable importance to direct election of the central legislature as establishing lines of division cutting across national boundaries and thus minimising centrifugal tendencies. But I can conceive other arrangements here, just as I can conceive arrangements other than those of existing federations for the regulation of inter-State trade and migration. The fundamental requirement is the surrender to a central authority of those powers whose independent exercise is inimical to stability and justice.

But how is this to be brought about? It is difficult to believe that permanent European peace can be attained by anything which stops far short of all Europe, excluding Russia; a smaller federation, limited to the Western Powers, would run the risk of raising up rivals. But it is to live in a fool's paradise to suppose that such a construction can take place immediately; as Mr. Nicolson has remarked, it is truly saddening to see the facility with which certain enthusiasts assume away the difficulties of this most tremendous objective. Federation implies not merely a common culture—we have the beginnings of that—it implies almost more or less similar governmental institutions and habits; it implies complicated administrative and financial readjustments; it implies a degree of order which, on the most favourable hypothesis, is not to be expected at the end of the present War. These are not things which can be brought into being in a day or even perhaps in a generation. We can only hope for them at all if, in the period after the War, there is a solid nucleus of stability and power in the west.

For this reason my hopes for the immediate future centre chiefly in a suggestion which I have already put forward in *The Spectator*. I believe that there exist already the main conditions necessary for a permanent federal union between this country and France¹—common political ideals, close geographical propinquity, no insuperable clash of economic interest. This is surely a step which is called for by all the necessities of the present situation. Unless there is permanent association between our two peoples—permanent pooling of military and economic resources and continuous identity of foreign policy—there is no hope of even the beginnings of a

¹ These articles appeared in the spring of 1940, before the fall of France.

successful peace settlement. Why should we not proceed immediately to construct it, not only as a consolidation of defensive power but also as the foundation stone of an eventual United States of Europe?

FRANCE AND GERMANY

PROFESSOR LIONEL ROBBINS' contribution to this discussion reveals, as I hoped and expected, the existence of a considerable area of common ground between him as a believer, and me as a disbeliever, in Federal Union as a direct objective. (As I shall show later, I by no means reject Federal Union as an ultimate objective.)

He, like me, regards Mr. Clarence Streit's conception of a federation of fifteen democracies scattered over four continents as utterly impracticable. He, like me, would confine consideration of the problem to Europe alone. He, like me, marvels at the facility with which many supporters of Federal Union "assume away" the tremendous difficulties inherent in the proposal. On my side I agree with him emphatically (though with certain important reservations), when he suggests that close and intimate association between Great Britain and France is the foundation-stone on which all stability in post-war Europe must be based. My reservations need explaining. I have spoken of "close and intimate association." Actually that represents my conception, not Prof. Robbins'. The words he used are "a permanent federal union between this country and France." There I must part company with him—at the point which is the very crux of the whole Federal Union idea. I am convinced that a certain degree of freedom and elasticity is imperative in the relations between any two States, much more between the members of a group of States, and the fact that, under all the current theories of Federal Union, a State which contracts the federal relationship can never regain its independence except by war is an objection which to my mind must be completely fatal.

Consider the position in the world today. The happiest and most hopeful relation between independent States is that subsisting between the self-governing members of the British Commonwealth of Nations. While the formal ties that bind them are of the slightest their co-operation is harmonious and wholehearted, but to suggest to any one of them that it was not free to secede from the Commonwealth at will would be enough to drive it to demonstrate the con-

trary by seceding on the spot. The common bond is freedom, not fetters. We are, of course, discussing here Federal Union, and, as I observed in an earlier chapter, the relationship between the members of the Commonwealth is the very antithesis of the federal. In a European Union the bonds must necessarily be more visible and formal, but there are even stronger reasons in the second case than in the first for a refusal to surrender our freedom irrevocably, and for all time, by one tremendous leap in the dark.

To return to ourselves and France. Prof. Robbins is, of course, right in emphasising all that the two nations have in common to-day—common political ideals, close geographical propinquity, no insuperable clash of economic interests (to quote his words). This moreover, is emphatically not the moment to dwell on the points on which the two countries differ. But let us not pretend they are non-existent. We were divided by fundamental differences of outlook in those years in the 'twenties when M. Poincaré, as Prime Minister of France, was making his hate-of-Germany speeches every Sunday afternoon. And in 1923, when France was resolved on the invasion of the Ruhr and we were resolved against it, there was only one way out—for France to follow her conception of right and for us to follow ours. So today a federal relationship with France—even with France—would in my view impair, not intensify, our unity. As long as we have the spirit without which Federal Union with France would be impossible, such a union remains unnecessary. Linked arm-in-arm we can go any distance together—unlinking occasionally for the moment if it must be. Handcuffed to one another we should feel chafing and friction from the first.

But I am much more anxious to find points of agreement with Prof. Robbins than points of difference, and I will, therefore, only touch on one question about which he needs, I think, to say rather more than he has done. Is Germany to be inside the European Union, or outside? In my experience about half the advocates of Federal Union regard her inclusion as impossible, and the other half (Sir William Beveridge among them) as indispensable. Prof. Robbins is reluctant to stop short of "all Europe, excluding Russia." On the other hand he lays it down (and I agree) that federation implies not merely a common culture but also "more or less similar institutions and habits." Germany may no doubt establish democratic institutions after this war, as she did after the last, but what of her habits since (in Prof. Robbins' words) "the rise of the Bismarckian Empire"? Those habits, acquired and practised over a period of three-quarters of a century, are Europe's gravest problem

in peace, and by far the most potent factor making for war. By pertinacity and intrigue Germany might well be capable of mobilising enough support to dominate a European Federal Union, as Prussia did first the North German Federation and then the Second Reich. In a looser association, where a majority could not compel a minority to its will, she would have no such power.

Now I must enter a field where I have no pretension to meet Prof. Robbins, with his immense economic knowledge, on equal terms. But at least I agree with him fully when he urges the necessity for international understandings that will make possible the destruction of the barriers to trade and migration (are barriers to migration within Europe a major problem?) which, quite apart from the dislocation and impoverishment they involve, are, as he says, a perpetual irritant in international relations. I accept that fully. Autarky run mad has brought Europe to the verge of ruin. I am as anxious as Prof. Robbins to see how this evil can be exorcised, but I have still to be convinced that Federal Union is the only, or a practicable, or even a desirable, way of salvation. And I should like to put to Prof. Robbins one or two questions which I hope he may think it worth while to answer.

Assuming a European Federation, without Russia (disregarding the German difficulty for the moment), does this mean the destruction of all tariff barriers between Gibraltar and Helsinki, Galway and the Golden Horn, on the model of the United States, which is so assiduously displayed to us as pattern? If so, will not the financial and industrial dislocation resulting have devastating effects on employment and prosperity generally? Secondly, Prof. Robbins knows far better than I do how great a proportion of the national budgets of many countries is contributed by customs duties. Under a federal scheme all such duties would be levied by the countries on the circumference of the federal area, on behalf, not of course of the States that happened to collect them, but of the Union as a whole. What effect will this have on the finances of the constituent States? Unless the Union adopted free trade externally as well as internally the duties levied would presumably largely exceed the Union's own total expenditure. Is any allocation of the surplus among the several States practicable that would not lead to perpetual dissatisfaction and friction?

It may be possible to obviate these difficulties, but a larger question lies behind, and even if I can go so far with Prof. Robbins, I am afraid I see the shadow of divergence over us here. In his view economic union is inseparable from political union. That some

authoritative body must exist to deal with the almost menacingly formidable problems that economic union would raise is clear. Does Prof. Robbins insist that that body should be, not an association of governments, but a federal government created by the direct vote of the individual electors on the franchise roll in every State of the hypothetical Union? I hope he may find some middle course possible.

THE CASE FOR FEDERALISM

By PROFESSOR LIONEL ROBBINS

MR. WILSON HARRIS concludes his most recent contribution to our friendly argument by posing two rather technical questions. I think it will be convenient if I try to answer these before commenting on the wider issues raised subsequently. The first question deals with public finance. Since many European States are today dependent upon import duties for part of their revenue, will not their finances, he asks, be thrown into confusion by any federal scheme involving a substantial lowering of customs barriers? And, in any case, will not the division of federal revenues be a perpetual cause of friction and irritation?

The problem is important; and it is a valid point in Mr. Wilson Harris' indictment of the superficiality of current discussion of these matters that it is so very seldom even mentioned. I have no doubt that the initial readjustment of the different systems of public finance would be by far the most difficult administrative problem accompanying the formation of any European federation; and the experience of existing federations shows that the distribution of federal grants is indeed a perpetual bone of contention. But I cannot regard such problems as insoluble; the fact that they exist does not shake my belief that a federal solution would be worth while attempting. There are many methods of taxation, other than customs duties, available even to the most backward European State; and, if we are to be deterred by the prospect of disputes concerning the distribution of public money, then surely we might as well abandon politics altogether; for, in some form or other, that is the subject of political discussion anywhere. I would not like to appear to underestimate the burden of the work associated with any preliminary financial settlement. But I do not think it need founder on any insurmountable technical difficulty.

The second question concerns general trade policy. Would European Federation involve complete internal freedom of trade? And, if so, would this not involve financial and industrial dislocation with "devastating effects on employment and prosperity generally"? There is here a question of principle and a question of practice.

On the question of principle, I think my reply may be somewhat surprising, at any rate to those who conceive of federation solely in terms of existing models, though I hope it will reassure Mr. Wilson Harris. It is not necessary that the federal constitution should prescribe complete freedom of internal trade. It may be desirable that trade should be free. But it is not necessary that it should be made free by constitutional provision. What is necessary is that what restrictions exist should be imposed, or at least sanctioned, by the federal authority. It is possible to conceive of a system which retained some obstacles to trade and migration and which yet remained truly federal if the obstacles had federal sanction. But it is not easy to conceive of a federation in which the Member-States themselves had the last word in such matters. For that would mean that they retained the right to inflict grievous damage on their neighbours, while claiming federal protection from military retaliation—an arrangement which would rightly be regarded as a trap by the economically more vulnerable States.

In practice I imagine that for many years after the formation of any federation on a European scale, there would continue to be permitted some barriers to trade. I do not share Mr. Wilson Harris' fear that the immediate removal of barriers would involve economic catastrophe. It is important here to distinguish between the effects of unilateral and of multilateral reductions. If one nation removes its tariffs, then the transitional effects, if not the ultimate consequences, may be severely disturbing. But, if several nations remove tariffs simultaneously, this danger tends to disappear. What is lost on the swings is gained on the roundabouts. "Foreign" competition may damage one set of producers; but new markets "abroad" will benefit others. In any case, some notice would be given; and it is highly probable that, even if it were agreed to remove all tariffs on manufactures, political necessity would still compel the maintenance for a longer period of certain agricultural tariffs. I myself hope that federal policy would work towards complete freedom of internal trade; for, quite apart from the economic disadvantages of obstacles, there can be no doubt that their existence would involve considerable political complications. But, as I have said already, this is not the

essential point. The essential point is that exceptions to the principle of freedom should be a matter of federal sanction rather than of arbitrary action on the part of the Member-States.

I now come to questions on which the happy agreement hitherto prevailing in this discussion may be marred by a certain divergence. Mr. Wilson Harris agrees with me that some form of economic disarmament is necessary if the peace of Europe is to be secured. "I accept this fully," he says. But he is not convinced that this cannot be brought about—and maintained—without political reconstruction. He still hopes for an economic order without a political framework. I wish I could share his optimism. But I find it hard to discover its basis in either reason or experience. To me it seems in the highest degree improbable that, if the Governments of independent States are free to pursue whatever policies they please, some at least will not sooner or later choose policies which are inimical to international harmony; and I cannot see anything in the history of the attempts of the League of Nations to secure economic disarmament which suggests any other conclusion. Elsewhere in his article Mr. Wilson Harris makes much of the relations between the nations of the British Commonwealth. I confess I cannot see anything very encouraging about the economic harmony actually prevailing here, or the mechanism, or rather absence of mechanism, for securing agreement. Does Mr. Wilson Harris think that the spectacle of the predatory bargains of Ottawa affords much hope of any European settlement negotiated within the same sort of political framework?

It is quite true that there is not much likelihood of the economic frictions within the Empire leading to internecine war. But that is largely a matter of the fortunate accidents of relative national wealth, geographical position and external pressures. If the various members of the Commonwealth were closely jostled up together in one continental area, with their capitals within comfortable bombing distance of one another, and there were marked disparities of economic advantage due to conflicting economic policies, would Mr. Wilson Harris feel quite so sure that purely voluntary arrangements would stand the strain, year in, year out, of internal frictions and the attractions of alternative alliances? I am afraid that I should not. Where countries in close proximity are concerned, I am sure that we must rely on something more than sentiment or voluntary agreement if we are either to keep the peace or to remove the impediments which imperil it.

I insist on this; for I am convinced that it is the fundamental

point of the issue which divides us. There are indeed passages in Mr. Wilson Harris' last article from which one might infer that his extreme reserve regarding any form of federal union, including even union with France, rested, not so much upon scepticism of its practicability, but upon unwillingness to see the disappearance of national independence. But I cannot believe that this is what ultimately matters, for him any more than for me. It is not proposed to admit to the federation countries which do not accept permanent constitutional safeguards of liberty and democracy. It is not proposed to impose the rigid uniformity of a unitary and centralised State. All that is proposed is the surrender of liberty to make war and liberty to limit the economic opportunities of one's neighbours. I cannot believe that these are liberties which Mr. Wilson Harris regards as among the ultimate goods of life. I cannot believe that, if he were confronted with the naked alternative of the permanent surrender of these liberties or the perpetuation of the present chaos, there would be any doubt of his choice.

I am sure that, in the last analysis, his hesitations are due to the fact that he believes that somehow or other some intermediate solution is possible; that the nations of Europe can retain an ultimate liberty and yet be restrained from abusing it; that they can enjoy at once the prestige of independence and the benefits of indissoluble union; that there can accrue from the voluntary association of central governments what he would never expect to accrue from the voluntary associations of lesser governmental authorities. If I could persuade him that this is only likely, in any circumstances, as the result of an accidental equilibrium of inherently unstable forces, and that, in the present state of Europe, it is in the highest degree improbable, I do not think he would shirk the task of attempting a more solid construction. We both seek the same goal. We both see the tremendous difficulties ahead. It is only because I do not see any hope at all in the methods in which he still believes that I am compelled to turn to more drastic and difficult alternatives.

THE CASE AGAINST FEDERALISM

THE discussion between Prof. Lionel Robbins and myself has probably served by now any purpose it was capable of serving. Tempted though I am to take up some of the arguments on which Prof. Robbins has based his case, I think it will be both fairer and

more satisfactory to leave his statement of his reasons for supporting Federal Union as it stands, and confine myself here to stating my own reasons for taking a different view.

I do not, as I said earlier, reject Federal Union as an ultimate objective. On the contrary, I think the countries of Europe (it will be quite enough to consider Europe only for the present) should aim at so consolidating their relations with one another that whatever international association—whether a survival or a new creation—unites them after the War may evolve gradually and naturally from the stage of co-operation towards a closer relationship which may some day go as far as actual fusion. But I emphasise the words “gradually” and “naturally,” particularly the second. An artificial union, if ever ingenious framers of paper constitutions could persuade the peoples of Europe in a moment of enthusiasm or exhaustion to adopt it as part of the peace settlement, would lead inevitably to early and complete disaster. There can be no legislative union where there is no union of hearts and no spiritual allegiance.

In Europe today (and very much less in Mr. Clarence Streit's purely artificial union of fifteen democracies) there is no such allegiance. Count Coudenhove-Kalergi may be right in thinking that we ought to be as conscious of being European as we are of being British or French or Norwegian, but the fact remains that we are not. Britons have far more affinity with Americans than they have with Rumanians or Jugoslavs, and Spaniards more affinity with Latin America than with Belgium. We can perfectly well co-operate for practical purposes, but to imagine that the States of Europe, some with a thousand years of independence behind them, are going to renounce that independence and merge themselves once for all irrevocably in some untried and unprecedented European union, from which there can be no secession, is to credit them with proclivities of which none of them has so far shown the smallest sign. Federal Union must represent a general aspiration before there can be any question of framing a federal constitution. There is not a sign of such aspiration today. The Scandinavian countries are often cited as a group peculiarly fitted for some kind of regional union. Yet it is only thirty-five years since Norway actually separated from Sweden, and the three countries (or four, with Finland) have displayed none of the tendencies towards union which external counsellors seek to discover in them. Nor have Belgium and Holland. Nor have the Balkan States. Co-operation, perhaps, but of union not a sign. The War, of course, may change this, but past wars have done little in that direction.

In that case, it may be replied, such States must be educated; all Europe must. I quite accept that. But the process will certainly take decades, more probably generations. Lord Bryce, than whom no one has written more wisely or with a greater knowledge on international relations, dealt very pertinently with this in his *Holy Roman Empire*. "The permanence of an institution," he said, "depends not merely on the material interests that support it, but on its conformity with the deep-rooted sentiment of the men for whom it has been made," and speaking with special reference to the development of the North German Federation, and ultimately of the German Reich, he adds that that development was due most of all "to what we call the instinct or passion of nationality, the desire of a people conscious of a moral and social unity to see such unity expressed and realised under a single government, which shall give it a place and name among civilised States." ¹ Will anyone suggest that there exists anywhere an instinct or passion that would put any semblance of emotion behind the declaration "*Civis Europaeus sum*," or the smallest consciousness of a moral and social unity which desires to find expression in a single European government? There is no such consciousness and no such desire, and though in time both may be developed it would be a fatal mistake to assume their existence in the face of facts, or to attempt to force what can only evolve naturally.

The practical difficulties in the way of the creation of anything like a Federal Union are vast, quite apart from the immensity of the demands it makes on individual States. Is voting power to go by population? If so, is Russia to be in or out? Or Germany? Are dictatorships to be included at all? Or is there to be a union of democracies, with the dictatorships forming a rival *bloc*? What relations are the British Dominions likely to preserve with a Great Britain which has lost all control of its foreign policy? To which could, and must, be added all the immensely complex questions which arise in connexion with the constitution of federal land, sea and air forces. The effect on an average election meeting of the proposal to hand over the Royal Navy, which has not been unserviceable of late, to a hypothetical and incalculable Federal Government would be worth studying. And it is the electors who will decide.

The case for Federal Union rests on the unwarranted assumption that national sovereignty is something necessarily bad. National sovereignty no doubt can be misused, and often is. The same is true of a motor-car, but it does not follow in either case that abolition is the only remedy. How is the world the worse for France's national

¹ Chapter xxiv. pp. 488-9.

sovereignty, or Holland's, or Switzerland's, or, I would not hesitate to add, Great Britain's? There have, no doubt, been lapses, but is a Federal Union necessarily impeccable? In any case, it is quite certain that national sovereignties, if they die at all, will die very hard, and we cannot postpone the problem of an international organisation till we can get one that involves the surrender of national sovereignty. That means that we must continue with something like the present League of Nations. But the League, Federal Unionists insist—it is the whole basis of Clarence Streit's argument—has failed. If that were true, which I contest, it would be necessary to prove not only that the League has failed, but that its failure was inevitable, and inherent in its constitution. Many Federal Unionists, who see no hope in co-operation between independent sovereign States, do claim that. The League, in fact, has partly failed and partly succeeded. So has Christianity. So has the institution of marriage. But there is no general proposal to abandon either. The League's failure was due, moreover, largely to unfortunate accidents. If Chamberlain, Briand and Stresemann had had three or four years longer together to fortify the League in its critical first decade, or if internal mistakes in Germany had not put the Nazis in office, all subsequent history might have been different. There was nothing inevitable about the League's failure—so far as it has failed.

You cannot reverse natural processes or skip stages. Co-operation must precede fusion. And till the one has been effected it is futile to press for the other. On the other hand, fusion may well emerge as the natural goal of co-operation. Nations that will not dream of divesting themselves of their sovereignty once for all by a single act may well divest themselves of it bit by bit, as their co-operation breeds confidence, through political, economic and disarmament agreements, by all of which they sacrifice some part of their full freedom of action. A European Council within the League may gradually generate that sense of Europeanism which is lacking today and without which any European Union would be built on sand, or, worse still, on friable parchment. And within Europe groups of like-minded and contiguous nations may be able to put Federal Union to the proof on a small scale and so provide a working model for the whole Continent. No one but a bigot would rule out Federal Union as an ultimate goal. No one but an anarchist would seek to bring it into being before the fundamental conditions for its existence have developed.

Disjecta Membra

LAPSES OF THE PRESS

A MONTH ago a woman of complete unimportance, but endowed with a little meretricious notoriety as the daughter of a titled father, was arrested and charged with murder. Some kind of brawl had taken place at four in the morning at the woman's flat between herself and the man whose mistress she was; a revolver belonging to her went off in the struggle, and the man was killed. Tried at the Old Bailey on a charge of murder, or alternatively of manslaughter, she was proved not guilty on either count and discharged. Leaving the Court in a state of collapse, she had sufficiently recovered the next day (a Friday) to be photographed repeatedly, cigarette in mouth, at the wheel of her limousine, on the way to her hairdresser's, and to spend part of that day and the next (presumably) in dragging her emotions back to life and committing them to paper for the benefit of the readers of a widely circulated Sunday journal, where they appeared side by side with the first instalment of the autobiography of her dead lover.

Of this woman's "life-story" as told by herself little need be said here. The less said about it anywhere the better. It is unadulterated literary exhibitionism from beginning to end. Every sentiment any person of normal decency would consider sacred, and enshroud with the reticence it demands, is ignored and paraded with every elaboration of *naïveté* and ostentatious self-pity, to keep the Sunday-paper-reading public sufficiently supplied with "human documents." The woman and the man she lived with were described by the Judge, in language stultified by its inadequacy, as leading "rather useless lives." There is some worth in most human beings, but nothing in fact came to light at the trial to indicate that the writer of "My Life-Story" ("I write in tears" is the opening sentence) has anything better in her to make a life-story of than the miserable stuff she has set her name to would suggest. What her real emotions are she only knows. It may be simply incompetence that gives her memoirs the impression of utter falsity and artificiality throughout. On a reading of the evidence at the Old Bailey it may be possible to feel sympathy for the woman who sat for those three days in the dock. On a reading of these memoirs no decent person could experience anything but a sense of inexpressible disgust. For a woman to expose

herself physically naked would be far less repellent than a deliberate parade of the secrets of what she would presumably call her soul.

That, of course, does not end the matter. The "Story of my Life" is no spontaneous self-revelation. It is a piece of calculated exploitation by newspaper proprietors who have nothing to learn from any man in the art of giving the public what the public may be supposed to want. And there is all too much reason to believe their judgement sound. It would be strange if the appetite of a public that has had every sordid detail of the Old Bailey trial served up to it verbatim for three successive days were not by this time well whetted. It is there that the real problem arises. How are cases of this kind to be treated by the Press? Is any restriction, such as now applies to the reporting of divorce cases, practicable or desirable? Practicable in the narrow sense, of course, it is. It would be possible enough to confine the reports to counsel's opening and closing speeches, the Judge's summing-up and the final verdict. But such a limitation could never be seriously contemplated. We are entitled to claim that we have the most just and the most efficient legal system in the world, particularly on the criminal side, and publicity is the breath of life to it. It would never be tolerated that in a murder trial, of all trials, any part of the proceedings should be withheld from the public gaze. Establish a censorship, or partial censorship there, and false rumours would spring to life like a field of mushrooms. It is well for the jury to know that the gaze of the public is on them as they consider their verdict; well even for the Judge to realise that his summing-up is being listened to by the world. What is called trial by newspaper has been ended once for all in this country by the rigour of the law on contempt of court, and accurate and restrained newspaper reporting is the best of all guarantees (superimposed, of course, on many others) that justice will in fact be done in the place where justice is dispensed.

The evil—and it is a grave one—today is that the reporting is not restrained. So far from that, there is now added to the verbatim reporter the descriptive writer, whose business it is to portray every flickering change of the prisoner's countenance, to count her tears, if it happens to be a woman in the dock, to describe her collapses and semi-collapses, to convey the *timbre* and tremors of her tones, to mirror every manifestation of emotion by her relatives. Restraint, of course, is possible. No paper in the country prints the evidence in cases of criminal assault. But restraint does not pay, and competition between daily papers—still more between Sunday papers—is desperately keen. If the public wants details of murder trials,

particularly when they touch the fringes of "Society," no paper, except one or two of special standing, can afford to disappoint it. The result is profoundly to be deplored, for it is idle to contend that the mind is unaffected by what it feeds on. Lust for mere sensation is a sign of degeneracy in any society, and the lure of the Old Bailey last week, both to those who gained access by luck or favour and to those who tried and failed, was an unedifying spectacle.

There is no question here of puritanism or censoriousness. It matters ultimately to everyone that the citizens of the country we live in should, in the broadest sense, covet earnestly the best gifts and cultivate increasingly a taste responsive to what makes life worth while, not to what makes it mean and squalid. The sordid sides of life cannot be concealed. A generation ignorant of salient facts will be incapable of facing facts. But there is all the difference in the world between a plain record framed in the service of objective truth and the deliberate stirring up of mud to be displayed spadeful by spadeful lest any drop or gobbet of it should be overlooked. To be spared the descriptive writer and left to content ourselves with the straightforward reporter would be something as a first step. The second, never more important than today, would be an agreement by the newspapers to let the protagonists in a *cause célèbre* relapse forthwith into whatever degree of obscurity the Court proceedings had dragged them from. As things are, it is a question of which paper can get to them first and bid highest for their story, in order to give the public what the public wants, and what the public is thereby made to want more avidly and in larger measure and in more gratifying detail when the next trial comes. Such penalties does a literate nation pay for its literacy, and the way to better things is hard to see. The remedy, no doubt, is the education of the public taste. But who is to educate it? And what means are there equal in potency with the agencies which in certain directions—fortunately in certain directions only—are demoralising it now?

FAMILY OR FREEDOM?

IN a book just published¹ the Master of Selwyn sets himself to combat the ideas on sexual morality expounded by Bertrand Russell—as the present Earl Russell prefers still to be called. Mr. Russell challenges accepted moral standards. Marriage, for him, is the union of two persons drawn together by some degree of affinity, joined by

¹ *The New Morality*, by G. E. Newsom (Ivor Nicholson and Watson, 6s.).

physical as well as spiritual intercourse, but always with the proviso that for either party sexual relations with casual friends, or with anyone at all, are to be permitted, and indeed approved. Against that doctrine the Master of Selwyn directs a massed argument, based not on the canons of religion—for he is addressing a wider audience than the professedly religious—but on biology, anthropology and social experience past and present, all invoked to establish the thesis that the family is the indispensable foundation of the life of any civilised community, and that sexual freedom according to the evangel of Mr. Russell would be fatal to the family as an institution.

So the battle is joined. At first sight it is an uneven conflict, for Mr. Russell is issuing an easy invitation to self-indulgence (made safe by a new familiarity with contraceptives) and Mr. Newsom preaching the sterner doctrine of self-discipline and self-restraint. To say that is by no means to condemn Mr. Russell out of hand. Self-indulgence is not necessarily evil. The enjoyment of good music might be held to fall into that category. Everything depends on the nature of the enjoyment sought and seized. Mr. Russell is quite definite as to that. Man, he contends, has a craving not merely for sexual intercourse but for variety in it. "To love one only and to cleave to her" is an outworn ideal. The new morality has found a better way. The world has been wrong in its views of marriage for three or four thousand years, but it is turning at last to a mode of life at once more natural and more satisfying.

That thesis has to be examined and either accepted or refuted. It is no use meeting it with mere dogma. To demonstrate that life so ordered is inconsistent with the tenets of the Christian religion is idle except in argument with the minority who recognise the authority of those tenets as decisive. In an age where all authority tends to be questioned, and to a large extent rightly, much broader considerations must be invoked. The weakness of Mr. Russell's case is that ultimately it rests on a single contention—that sexual indulgence is agreeable, and that for a man to enjoy sexual experience with one woman, or a woman to enjoy such experience with one man only, is a foolish and needless and galling limitation. But is his case really weakened by that? If what he says is true—if, in particular, the physical enjoyment he advocates involves no compensating, or more than compensating, sacrifice—then the flaw in his argument will be hard to find. Fortunately for his critics he recognises one flaw himself, and it is all but fatal. Across the open road to sexual freedom stands the institution of the family. The traditions we have inherited and the conventions we observe are too strong for Mr. Russell. Can

the father or mother contract the habit of spending week-ends when they choose with a casual partner and still maintain the confidence and affection on which the cohesion of any family must depend? Mr. Russell does not claim seriously that they can, but he contends that as things are, confidence and affection wear thin enough in most homes after a few years of marriage, and that for the rest the family tradition is decaying and on the whole it is better so. Children, no doubt, complicate the issue, but the State will assume responsibility for them more and more.

This is no new doctrine. *Marriage and Morals* was published three years ago. But since the Master of Selwyn has taken up the challenge in a volume which casts the whole problem afresh into the arena of discussion, it is necessary to make clear precisely what the problem is. Its importance no one will be disposed to underrate, for this is no mere clash of theories. It is something that touches the life of the ordinary man and woman at its most vital point. Are they, by living monogamously, depriving themselves of satisfactions they might properly enjoy? Or would they, by departing from monogamy, lose something intrinsically higher and better, which once lost they never could regain? To that, of course, Mr. Russell gives one answer and Mr. Newsom another. And this must be said in fairness: those who think with Mr. Russell presumably practise what they preach, and can therefore speak from a fuller experience than their opponents, who are not prepared to abandon their monogamy to discover for themselves whether departure from it works well or not. They must confine themselves to arguing, as they may with justice, that they have watched departure from it in other people and that the results have rarely been encouraging.

This, once more, is a question not of theory but of practical life. Thousands of men and women in these islands alone are entering on the experience of marriage every day. Mr. Russell urges them to enter it on one basis, Mr. Newsom on another. Many of the latter's arguments from biology and anthropology, sound though they may be, will weigh with them little. For ultimately there can be no argument about ideals. They make their own appeal or fail to make it. There is in all things a mean, as Aristotle demonstrated long ago. Self-discipline may doubtless degenerate into futile self-immolation. But between the ideals of self-discipline, reasonably interpreted, and self-indulgence every man must make his choice. Once concede, moreover, that sexual freedom for husband and wife makes for unhappiness, disharmony and distrust within the family, and the Master of Selwyn's case is established. That, it may be argued,

need not be conceded, at any rate without considerable reservations, for there are cases where husband and wife do by voluntary agreement accord each other such freedom and the family life does not visibly suffer. That may be true, but such cases are rare, and it may well be doubted whether under such conditions family life can attain—or maintain—its full perfection. But in fact Mr. Russell makes this very concession himself. He recognises that existing ideals of family life stand in the way of his doctrines, and he therefore both advocates and predicts the abandonment of those ideals.

That is the real dividing-point. The best weapon against a low ideal is a higher ideal. There must be some ultimates in life. If the relationships within the family, of husband and wife, of parent and child, with all the courage and sacrifice they have evoked, consecrated as they have been by the greatest literature in every country in every age, make no appeal to men and women of today seeing life before them and asking themselves how to live it, then it may be doubted whether any of the other arguments the Master of Selwyn marshals will convince them. They are sound arguments none the less. Ordinary social intercourse between men and women would be vitiated perpetually by doubts and suspicions if it were liable to develop into physical intercourse at any moment. The whole structure of the national life would be transformed if the family as a unit were eliminated, as it largely has been in the cities (not the villages) of Soviet Russia.¹ And that the family would survive if marriage became the light thing some of the new moralists of today would make it is beyond belief. Manners change with changing generations. Today the movement is all towards liberty. Questions of sex are discussed with a freedom and a sanity which in all ordinary cases is altogether good. The normal relationship between normal men and women is sound and wholesome. But that is because there are still recognised to be bounds that only one man and one woman can without detriment pass together, marking the entry to a relationship still acknowledged as the highest in life.

THE CONVICT'S LIFE

Too little is known about life in convict prisons, and for an obvious reason. Most men sentenced to penal servitude are incapable of expressing themselves on paper, and the few who have the capacity

¹ Written in 1932.

are usually more anxious to obliterate their experiences than to advertise them. Prison conditions, consequently, are a subject on which most people's ideas are hazy. Is the food tolerable? Is there any solitary confinement, except as a special punishment? Is five years in a British convict prison likely to be reformatory or brutalising in its effects on the average convict? Is restraint and separation from all previous acquaintance, whether relatives or friends, sufficient punishment in itself, or must the conditions of life behind the prison walls be made deliberately as harsh as possible, in order that the incarceration may be an effective deterrent and the danger of prison being "made too easy" be successfully averted?

These are questions worth asking, and it is only now and then that books like a volume recently published¹ provide material for an answer. Not, of course, a conclusive answer. Not necessarily an accurate answer. Any convict with a ten-years' sentence behind him would have to be more or less than human if his judgement were not in some degree warped by his experiences. It is quite sufficient justification of a convict's autobiography to say of it that it establishes a case for enquiry. That can be said without any question or hesitation about this book. The author, who succeeded to a substantial fortune at the age of 16, served with distinction in the war, escaped from prison in Germany, became a convinced Communist, took orders from Moscow, and in 1928 was sentenced to ten years' penal servitude for seeking to obtain information likely to be useful to an enemy. He actually served nearly eight years—all at Parkhurst, except when on remand at Brixton and Wandsworth. He went in at 28, he came out at 35.

In criticisms of a system the personality of the critic is obviously a vital factor. Mr. Macartney's personality can only be judged by his writing (and by a prologue in which his past life is briefly and usefully recounted by Mr. Compton Mackenzie), and the verdict must be in his favour. He is a Communist, and therefore up against society as at present organised; still more up against the prison system in this country as that is at present organised. But he indulges in no indiscriminating diatribes. To many prison officials in particular he pays generous, and in some cases unqualified, tribute. And where he condemns he has clear ideas about reform.

What, above all, is wrong with our prison system is lack of imagination, and the soulless automatic enforcement of cast-iron regulations which ought to be used as guide, not strait-waistcoat. The result, inevitably, is a cruel and slavish uniformity, which subjects the best-

¹ *Walls Have Mouths*, by W. F. R. Macartney (Gollancz, 10s. 6d.).

behaved and best-educated prisoner to conditions instituted for the worst. And some of the standard rules are intolerable. Mr. Churchill, to his credit, abolished the solitary confinement in which the first weeks of a penal servitude sentence had to be spent; but Sundays are celebrated almost wholly in solitary confinement still. Work ends at 1.45 on Saturdays; there is an hour's exercise from 3 to 4, and an hour's exercise on Sunday morning (compulsory) and on Sunday afternoon (voluntary), with chapel for those who care to go.

"I spent," says Mr. Macartney, "on each Sunday in the first years of the sentence twenty-three hours in solitary confinement, on Saturday twenty hours in solitary confinement. Altogether forty-three hours out of the forty-eight were spent alone behind a locked door, and frequently without a book to read."

That was eight years ago, but conditions, I believe, are little changed today.

And, of course, the silence rule remains. Men work together, but they are forbidden to talk, except so far as the work necessitates it. At exercise they are forbidden to talk at all, and are punished if they do. Then there is the food. It is the fashion, no doubt, to complain of food everywhere—in clubs, in hotels, in schools, even (I am told) in the home. It would be strange if prisons were an exception. But the dietary is on record, and here it is. For breakfast, every day for ten years or fifteen or twenty: $\frac{1}{2}$ pint of porridge, 8 oz. of bread, 1 oz. of margarine, 1 pint of tea. For supper (the last meal of the day, served at 4.30) every day for ten years or fifteen or twenty: 1 pint of cocoa, 10 oz. of bread, 1 oz. of cheese, 1 oz. of margarine. The midday meal alone provides scope for any variety. Mr. Macartney is scathing about this, too—though it is fair to say that once when I visited Dartmoor quite unexpectedly on an undated permit I found the dinner then in preparation in the kitchen excellent. But the fact that everything is invariably steamed, not baked or roast, and therefore tastes sodden and dead, may be a just count against it. Whether the diet is sufficient for men working in carpenter's shops, or sewing mail-bags, is a question on which I should like the opinion of someone like Sir John Orr.

Of course many complaints are based on apparent harshness for which in fact some good ground exists. New books can be ordered by convicts, if they have a little money, but not second-hand ones, which are so much cheaper. A gratuitous irritation? No; for second-hand books could obviously be made the vehicle of secret messages, in code or otherwise. Mr. Macartney quotes an apparently

imbecile refusal of the authorities to let him have *The Europa Year Book*. This, apparently, was due to the wooden enforcement of a rule which had some reason behind it; reference books containing biographies were banned because convicts were found to be using them to elaborate plans of fraud or blackmail for future use on release. The trouble is the prison hierarchy. Above the prisoner—weighing on him with intolerable pressure—is a pyramid which has a regiment of warders as its base and the Home Secretary as its apex, with Chief Officer, Deputy-Governor, Governor, Prison Commissioners and Visiting Justices in between. Hardly anyone below the Prison Commissioners has the courage, even if he has the imagination, to deviate by a split inch from the strait routine laid down by the Statutes.

But the fundamental question is whether our convict system (Mr. Macartney writes, and I write, only of the thousand or so men in the three long-term prisons, Maidstone, Parkhurst and Dartmoor) is to be used to dehumanise men deliberately or not. Because there is little doubt that that is what it is doing today. No one wants to make prison pleasant. It is a punishment, and it ought to be. But mere incarceration is a tremendous punishment in itself. To be cut off for five years, or seven, or ten, or more than that, from family, from the crowded life of the street and factory and workshop, from the pictures, from football, from the sight of a green field or a London park, from a soft chair to sit on and a soft bed to lie on, from a daily newspaper—that means something that neither I nor most people who read this article can easily imagine. Prison that kills a man's mind is a crime perpetrated by society. Why should prisoners, particularly educated prisoners, not have whatever books they want, within reason, for their solitary hours, not merely one or two a week? Why should they not be allowed to talk in the exercise yard? For fear of their discussing escapes or mutinies? But full precautions can be taken against escapes, and it is needless vetoes that encourage mutiny. Why is tobacco rigorously banned till a man reaches the "special stage" after serving four years of his sentence? Is the allowance of one letter in the first four months of a sentence, and then one every three months, fixed with the deliberate intention of cutting a man off from everything human in life?

In short, is it more rational to allow a prisoner reasonable minor privileges and to punish him by withholding, say, his tobacco or his letters, for a period; or to keep him under a régime of such perpetual hardship that all that is left for punishment is bread and water or the cat? Fortunately that question is already out of date.

Conditions have changed for the better, in some prisons at any rate, since Macartney was in Parkhurst. I can best illustrate that by a record of impressions gleaned at one particular prison, Dartmoor, which I have lately had the opportunity of visiting. I had been to Dartmoor before, and between the two visits I had read several of the recent books by ex-convicts and noted various of the more specific criticisms, such as the difficulty of obtaining enough library books, monotonous food and stale bread, the rough-handling of the men by officers, and—peculiar to Dartmoor—the cell-walls running with water during all the winter months.

It will be simplest to deal with these forthwith. The wet walls story emanated, I think I am right in saying, from an ex-convict who had never been inside Dartmoor Prison, but to anyone who has known the moor for forty years, as I have, it is credible enough. The inside walls of a cottage where I have spent parts of many winters were always marked with trickles of condensed moisture. But the prison is, rather surprisingly, conspicuous as an exception to the local rule. On the day of my visit, when the moor had been wrapped in a thick fog till noon—the precise condition that makes for wet walls—the prison cells were as dry as Buckingham Palace. Their temperature varied from 58 degrees to 60. The halls and workshops, warmed by hot pipes, were equally dry.

As for the books, there can be no grievance at Dartmoor, whatever may be the case in other convict prisons. The allowance is three volumes of fiction and two of non-fiction (*e.g.* travel or biography) a week. A man must be an abnormal reader if with the time at his disposal—two or three hours in an evening, and most of Sunday—he can get through more than that. And in addition educational or technical books may be sent in from outside. It is true, of course, that a man cannot always get the books he wants the first time he applies. Neither can the ordinary member of any subscription library. Actually the normal number of five books must often be exceeded, for I was told that about 2000 volumes were actually in circulation in the cells; the number of prisoners at the moment was 297. The officer in charge of the library was obviously a genuine enthusiast for his work. Mr. George Orwell, incidentally, may be glad to know that his book *Down and Out in London and Paris* is (one of the prisoners assisting the librarian showed me the record of applications) easily first favourite, with *Tovarish* (prison-life in Siberia) as runner-up.

Food must always be a vexed question. That the prison dietary is drearily monotonous can hardly be denied. Dartmoor prisoners have porridge (with milk) for breakfast every day of their lives. So,

for that matter, do I, and their porridge is quite good. But I have a good deal besides; they only have bread and margarine besides, with tea to drink. For supper they have cocoa, also quite good, with bread, margarine and cheese. That the bread is kept for 48 hours before being issued is due to medical advice, not to any desire to give the men unpalatable food. There is nothing wrong with its quality; it was good enough at any rate for the Governor's family to take prison loaves voluntarily. The midday meal the day I saw it consisted of two large slices of tinned meat with boiled potatoes and pickles. Pickles alternate with cabbage; the men prefer the pickles. The next day's meal was to be meat soup, containing three vegetables as well as meat; Sunday's was to be roast mutton with potatoes and cabbage. The much discussed sea-pie I have not encountered, unless indeed it was the perfectly palatable stew which I had seen when I was at Dartmoor before. Altogether there seems very little wrong with the midday meal. The other two are conspicuously lacking in variety, but under the new payment scheme men can buy little extras from the canteen if they choose. All meals are taken in cells; the men are said to prefer that; probably in fact tastes vary.

On the real relations between the men and the officers a casual visitor is obviously not entitled to dogmatise, but there was no mistaking the respectful friendliness with which the prisoners talked to the Governor or Chief Officer as we went round the workshops. That the Governor himself is genuinely convinced there is no bullying by officers I am quite certain, and he should be in a position to know. The shops, by the way, differ singularly little in appearance from those you would see in any industrial concern, and some of the men at any rate clearly take an interest in what they are doing. In discussing with one of them a handcart he was constructing I assumed that he and a mate were doing it together. No, no, he insisted. It was all his own, and he displayed its features with manifest satisfaction. Another showed me, with equal satisfaction, how the knitting machine he was manipulating worked, and the affection the men on the farm develop for the horses they drive or the cows they milk is one of the fundamental prison facts.

No one can pretend that penal servitude for anything from three years to fourteen (all the inmates of Dartmoor are old hands, none of them first offenders) can be anything but a terrible punishment—the recompense, in many cases, for terrible crimes—but not many people, I fancy, realise how much alleviation there is. A prison cell is a bleak apartment, and is meant to be, but it hardly corresponds to the common idea of it. Take one which happened to strike me,

though it differed very little from the average. On the wall the inmate had something over a dozen photographs of his family, a large one of his wife, three of his boy and two girls, and the rest snapshots taken in the garden of their neat little suburban house. On a shelf in the corner were four or five books from the library, and as many more of the man's own—most of them on psychology, which he was studying to keep his mind fresh—a bottle of ink, a Rolls razor (men wash in cold water, with a hot bath once a week, but have hot water to shave in every morning) and one or two other sundries. It was no bare cell, but a place on which a human being (with an unfortunate proclivity for breaking and entering) had definitely imprinted his personality.

Of punishments I can say little. I saw the sinister triangle to which men are lashed for flogging, but no man has been flogged at Dartmoor since 1932, though a few have been birched. I saw also the padded room, reserved for the violent and temporarily unbalanced, but that too has not known an inmate for five years. The punishment cells are bare, but neither damp nor cold. Only one of them was occupied—by a problem prisoner, who firmly declined to do any work of any kind—an attitude singularly perplexing to deal with but obviously impossible (if prison discipline is to be maintained at all) to ignore.

Two other features of Dartmoor life must have their place in any fair survey of the institution—recreation, and the payment scheme inaugurated at Dartmoor, as at other convict prisons, in the quite recent past. Recreation I can only describe as I saw it on what was said to be not one of the best nights. Recreation time is from six to seven. In the chapel a band of about twenty performers was playing—not practising for anything in particular, but playing for the pleasure or satisfaction of it. Somewhere else a French class was being taken by a secondary schoolmaster who comes over from Tavistock. In one of the halls twenty or thirty men in singlets and shorts were doing physical exercises under a prison officer. All this, of course, is purely voluntary on the men's part; if they prefer to stay in their cells, or devote their time to some unorganised form of recreation (the number of recreation evenings available varies according to a man's "stage") they can. The special-stage men (with over four years' service) have their own recreation room, with an excellent wireless, presented by a frequent and highly popular visitor to the prison, various games and *The Times*, and they can use it every night. Lower-stage men, much more numerous, were established in a couple of halls in the old 1812 war prison (not used for any other purpose).

They have a gramophone, but for them wireless is still a hope of the future; they were playing draughts or dominoes or chess, talking together, tramping round the long room in couples, reading last Sunday's papers or just watching other people's games or listening to the gramophone. This happens every night for the special-stage men, three times a week for the third stage and twice for the second, and it goes far to dispel the "silence and segregation" idea of convict prisons still rather widely prevalent.

The payment system looks already like being an immense success. Even if a man only earns as little as 3d. a week—the average is about 7d.—it will buy him a couple of cigarettes a day, and the difference between two cigarettes a day and no cigarettes for three years is something for which human language has no adequate form of expression. He can buy instead, or in addition if his earnings run to it, tobacco (the Governor started the scheme by giving every man a cherrywood pipe), matches (you can split a match in three with a safety-razor blade, and each of the three will light), cigarette papers (the method for real economy), sugar, treacle, and various other little additions to cell meals. The only thing wrong with the payment scheme is that the special-stage men heard of it on their wireless before even the Governor had had official notification—not, of course, that that in the end really mattered.

This professes to be no complete or balanced picture of life at Dartmoor. Considerations of space alone preclude that. It simply calls attention to certain features of prison life of which other people have probably failed, like myself, to take full account. Various inmates of different penal establishments have lately written of the prisons they have known. No one is in a position to check their statements except other ex-prisoners (and not always they; floggings, for example, have been described in detail, but no convict has ever seen another convict flogged) or officials, and the officials for various reasons keep silence. Prisons are sombre places, though less sombre than they were, and endeavours to humanise them from inside deserve to be both known and applauded, even though there is more to be done yet.

THE DEATH PENALTY

By an undesigned but interesting coincidence, on the day that the Home Secretary was expounding to the House of Commons a Penal Reform Bill whose whole tendency was to lay emphasis on the

reformatory rather than the deterrent character of punishment, a lecture by Col. G. D. Turner, till recently an Assistant Prison Commissioner under Sir Samuel Hoare, on "Some Alternatives to Capital Punishment," was being delivered elsewhere in London. That title bespeaks at any rate an open mind on the question of abolishing capital punishment altogether, a subject on which public attention has been focussed, at least momentarily, as the result of the passage by the House of Commons of Mr. Vyvyan Adams' resolution urging complete abolition for an experimental period of five years. The adoption of the resolution has, of course, no legal effect, for it was only an expression of opinion, not a Bill, that secured a favourable vote of 114 to 89, and Mr. Geoffrey Lloyd for the Home Office declared himself definitely hostile to the proposal. But the question of the desirability of continuing a practice which most people would prefer to see abolished if they were satisfied that abolition would entail no consequences dangerous to the community has been forcibly pressed on the Government's consideration, and will no doubt be pressed on it again.

It is essentially a question on which the public must pronounce. Indeed one of the arguments used in the debate by opponents of abolition was that the Government could not run ahead of public opinion, the presumption being that if it abolished capital punishment it would. That may well be doubted. If most reasonable people were questioned they would agree that by the twentieth century some improvement on the primitive principle of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth should have been devised, and admit that hanging is only to be tolerated because no adequate alternative to it has been evolved. Even so the arguments for retaining capital punishment are only decisive if it can be established that hanging does in fact act as a deterrent, and that without it the number of murders would be likely to increase. That clearly cannot be established. Nothing but experiment can prove it, which is a good ground for Mr. Vyvyan Adams' proposal that the experiment be tried for an initial period of five years. If Mr. Lloyd is right in arguing that such a period is too short to yield decisive results the conclusion to which that points is that the experiment should be given a longer trial, not that it should be given no trial at all. For if, which is highly improbable, it appeared that the abolition of the capital penalty was leading directly to an increase in murders, Parliament would certainly not hesitate to reimpose it before the end of the trial period.

The arguments in favour of the capital penalty are not impressive.

It is said, for example, that life-imprisonment, or some shorter term, would not be a deterrent in the same way as hanging is. Yet as things are, more murderers are imprisoned than hanged. Mr. Lloyd stated that in the years 1932-37 the number of capital sentences passed in England and Wales was 115. But the number of executions was not half 115. (The figure for 1935 was eight, for 1936 nine and for 1937 eight.) Reprieves were more numerous than hangings. And if to the murderers is added, as it logically should be, a by no means inconsiderable number of persons whom nothing but sheer luck caused to be convicted of attempted murder instead of murder, though the intent was the same, it is clear that the capital penalty can have only a very limited effect, since in fact the majority of murderers and potential murderers do not suffer it. And to the argument often used in connexion with some peculiarly brutal murder that this is manifestly a case which justifies the retention of the death penalty, the obvious answer is that the very fact that such a crime could be committed demonstrates the inefficacy of the deterrent.

We have to decide, moreover, whether in the case of murder every aspect of punishment except deterrence is to be ruled out. More and more, through the whole of our penal system, the reformatory element is being given prominence. That was the keynote of the Home Secretary's speech in the House of Commons on Tuesday. Does even just sympathy for the victim and just anger at the crime give warrant for a penalty which so far as this world is concerned excludes all possibility of reform? Murderers are not always shot through with vice. The author of a *crime passionnel* may be a man who in general character is as likely to be above as below the level of his fellow-citizens. For whose benefit is he to have his existence ended because of the principle that a life must be paid for with a life? We are accepting from the Home Secretary the verdict that corporal punishment is no deterrent, and its abolition is provided for in the Bill debated in Parliament recently. Public opinion appears to be ready, and rightly so, for the much more serious step of abolishing capital punishment likewise, at any rate for an experimental term.

But abolishing it in favour of what? To the solution of that problem Colonel Turner in the lecture already mentioned made an arresting contribution. Briefly, he would pass on the murderer an "indeterminate" sentence, consisting of imprisonment for a fixed period definitely as penalty, followed by treatment, for such length of time as the Home Secretary might decide, designed to fit him for an ultimate return to normal life. (If the idea of the return of a

murderer to live the ordinary life of the community causes alarm, it is worth remembering that many reprieved murderers are doing that today.) But the essence of the punishment should be a complete break, not indeed with life itself as now, but with all the criminal's past life. He should be deprived of his name and given a new one, cut off from all contact with family or associates; every relationship should be severed; the purpose would be that the man should almost literally "rise on stepping-stones of his dead self to higher things." That during the penalty period. In the reformatory period, by ingenious but by no means impracticable methods which Colonel Turner outlined, he would be found work, while still a prisoner, with ordinary workmen in some factory or other undertaking convenient to the prison, the date of his complete release being determined by the prison authorities and the Prison Commissioners. It is a highly suggestive project, and fully in line with modern doctrines of penal treatment, but Colonel Turner would be the last to claim that the only choice lies between his proposal and the present practice. There are various other possibilities, each of them sufficient to shake the faith of those who have mechanically accepted capital punishment as inevitable.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE ON VERSAILLES

IF Mr. Lloyd George had entitled the first of these two volumes¹ "My Part in the Peace Conference," or "The Peace Conference as I Saw It," some of the criticism which his claim to objectivity inevitably evokes would have been irrelevant. For this first volume, on the German Treaty, is very largely a personal apologia, and very largely a successful apologia. Mr. Lloyd George's record during the Paris Peace Conference was a good one; he stood in the main for reasonable terms for Germany; and the document he drafted at Fontainebleau in March, 1919, laying down the lines the future treaty should follow, can be reproduced today, as it is reproduced here, in full confidence that after nearly twenty years it needs neither extenuation nor excuse.

But if Mr. Lloyd George's narrative is to be treated as objective history, as "the truth" about the Treaties, other criteria apply. Mr. Lloyd George is, in fact, seeing the treaty primarily through his own eyes and secondarily through those of the British Empire Delegation.

¹ *The Truth About the Peace Treaties*, by David Lloyd George (Gollancz, 2 vols., 18s. each).

Extracts, sometimes a dozen pages long, from the deliberations of the delegation before the conference began at all are embodied repeatedly in the text. The chapter on the League of Nations is a case in point. It contains thirty-seven pages; of those precisely one is devoted to the discussions of the Peace Conference Commission which produced the Covenant; the rest is practically all pre-Conference history. From the mass of facts available a selection of the most important must obviously be made, and Mr. Lloyd George claims that he has omitted no relevant fact or document. Relevancy is, of course, a matter of opinion, but—to take one example—an account of the Russian negotiations which makes no mention of the Bullitt Mission or the attempt to enlist Dr. Nansen as intermediary seems rather seriously incomplete. Other instances could be cited of the omission of facts and incidents which earlier historians of the Peace Conference have thought essential.

But Mr. Lloyd George can claim with justice that he has recorded some discussions and reproduced some documents which earlier historians have not, most notably the record of the long and surprising debates, first in the British War Cabinet and then in the Inter-Allied Conference, on the proposed trial of the Kaiser. Singularly enough the War Cabinet was unanimous on the subject, the decisive factor (if one was needed) being a remarkable statement of the legal side of the case by the Attorney-General, Sir F. E. Smith. In the Inter-Allied Conference Baron Sonnino, the Italian Foreign Minister, alone dissented from the proposal to arraign the Kaiser, the Italian Premier, Signor Orlando, sharing the views of the majority. Mr. Lloyd George adds that President Wilson (who had not arrived in Europe) subsequently intimated that he was in agreement with the decision—which seems surprising in view of the strenuous opposition of the American Delegation to the proposal in the Peace Conference itself. The Kaiser was, of course, all the time safe in Holland, but the question of what would happen if the Dutch declined to surrender him was disposed of by Mr. Lloyd George's confident declaration that in that case Holland would be turned out of the (still non-existent) League of Nations.

In the matter of reparations Mr. Lloyd George is at pains to defend his election speeches of November, 1918, and in particular the forgotten utterance at Bristol (he omits to quote the well-known "search their pockets" passage), and to get back on Mr. Keynes, who may be assumed to be well able to take care of himself if controversy is pressed on him. The colonial question has manifestly a special relevance at this moment, and Mr. Lloyd George reproduces at

length the discussion on the subject in the Imperial War Cabinet. The arguments adduced by every speaker for the non-return of the captured colonies fall a little doubtfully on the ears of the less exuberant world of today; even Mr. Balfour, indeed, had some misgivings at the time, and they expressed themselves, after an eloquent exposition by General Smuts of the strategic importance of German East Africa (now Tanganyika), in the remark that the South African delegate's line of argument "was perhaps playing a little fast and loose with the idea of mandatory occupation."

The most valuable part of the book is the first chapter, in which Mr. Lloyd George, after observing with perfect justice that ninety-nine out of every hundred of the critics of the Treaty of Versailles have never read it, shows by a careful examination of the many official statements of the major Allied war aims, from 1914 to the date of the Fourteen Points (January, 1918), how little they differed from one another or from the treaty as ultimately drafted and signed. That is true, and it needed saying, though some of the subsidiary provisions of the treaty, such as the occupation of German territory as a guarantee of execution, were open to considerable objection. Mr. Lloyd George has collected a great deal of valuable material, and while his judgement in the matter of selection and arrangement may be questioned—about half his space is devoted to pre-Conference events and discussions—his work is an important addition to the mass of published histories of the Peace Conference. It is marred by a systematic denigration of President Wilson from the first chapter to the last, on a scale quite disproportionate with the plan of the book, even if the criticisms were just, which many of them palpably are not. Mr. Lloyd George explains that he liked President Wilson and only criticises him with regret in the interests of truth. With less criticism there would have been more truth—and no doubt less regret.

His first volume having disposed of the settlement with Germany, Mr. Lloyd George might be thought to have left himself only subsidiary matter to fill his second. That is far from the fact. Concerned as it is with the Italian demand for Fiume, the rival claims of the Czechoslovaks on one hand and the Austrian-Germans and Hungarians on the other, and the whole Palestine question, the second volume is of considerably greater contemporary interest than the first.

The Fiume controversy, with which the Peace Conference rang through half April of 1919, seems an old story now, but Mr. Lloyd George has proved that it is abundantly worth re-telling. He makes no bones about Italy's motives in entering the war. The Allied Powers were able, at some sacrifice of ethnological and other prin-

ciples dear to themselves and President Wilson, to outbid Austria, and Italy accordingly came into the war on their side for what she could get. That being so, and the minutes of the Conference of St. Jean de Maurienn (1917) having mentioned that "the Prime Minister pointed out that Italy's effort was practically confined to a defence of her frontier against greatly inferior enemy forces," it is a little surprising to find the ex-Prime Minister turned author recording with some rotundity that "war was declared, and before it was over Italy had sent millions of her best young men into the battlefield, where they acquitted themselves with a valour and skill which added distinction to the annals of a people whose courage and capacity once upon a time acquired and directed a World Empire." Perhaps the two sentiments can be reconciled on the "lions led by asses" theory.

Anyhow, the whole story of Italy's claims to territory under the London Treaty in defiance of ethnology and to Fiume on grounds (quite unsound) of ethnology; of President Wilson's adamant opposition and his unfortunate appeal to the Italian people over the heads of their leaders; of the withdrawal of Orlando and Sonnino from the Peace Conference, followed by their hasty return—the whole story is entertainingly retold with the assistance of copious quotations from the Peace Conference minutes, including (happily) the passage in which Sonnino exclaimed bitterly that "because America had given in in the case of France and Great Britain, because she had been immoral here, she tried to re-establish her virginity at the expense of Italy." All Mr. Lloyd George seems to have omitted are Signor Orlando's tears, indisputably historic though they were.

Most of the Italian controversy belongs to the past now. The same, unhappily, is not to be said of the Palestine controversy. In the Peace Conference days there was real hope of the United States accepting the mandate, and such consultation of the inhabitants as there was indicated a clear preference for America, and failing that for Great Britain. Mr. Lloyd George quotes some pertinent passages from the report of what he describes as "an American Commission," presumably the King-Crane Commission, which visited Syria and Palestine while the Conference was sitting, and which after full investigation "felt bound to recommend that only a greatly reduced Zionist programme be attempted by the Peace Conference, and even that only very gradually initiated." The wisdom of such counsel is patent in view of the observations Dr. Weizmann had just made to the Supreme Council, to the effect that the Zionist Organisation wanted "merely" to establish in Palestine under a Mandatory

Power an administration "which would render it possible to send into Palestine 70,000 to 80,000 Jews annually"; and to "make Palestine as Jewish as America is American or England English"; so that "later on, when the Jews formed the large majority, they would be ripe to establish such a government as would answer to the state of the development of the country and to their ideals." Zionist views on the absorptive capacity of the country were fortified by the interesting remark that the population in the days of Christ amounted to four millions.

But the most important part of Mr. Lloyd George's book is the closing chapter, in which he ends his second volume as he began his first, by claiming with considerable justice that the Peace Treaties as a whole did in the main accord with the war-aims of the Allied Powers as proclaimed repeatedly during the war. (It is pertinent, in that connexion, to recall that the German Treaty alone was negotiated on the basis of the Fourteen Points.) Being convinced that the era of great men closed with Clemenceau, President Wilson, himself and one or two others, he ascribes the breakdown of the Treaties, in spite of their authorship, to "the miscellaneous and unimpressive array of second-rate statesmen who have handled them for the past fifteen years." There is no doubt something in that. There is more in the claim that no Peace ever signed emancipated as many subject races; and it is equally true that the foundations for real disarmament were laid at Paris, and that the responsibility for the disastrous failure to achieve that indispensable reform lies at the door of the successors of the men who made the peace.

At one point Mr. Lloyd George is both inaccurate and unfair. Among the beneficial provisions of the Treaties he includes

"the conferring upon the League of Nations of full powers to revise any part of the Treaties where experience revealed that it was unjust or unworkable."

No such power, full or restricted, was conferred on the League of Nations, and Mr. Lloyd George must have read the Covenant with strange spectacles if he thinks it was. All the well-known Article XIX provides is that the Assembly may from time to time "advise the reconsideration" of treaties by the parties concerned. It can by the nature of things have no power to *impose* revision till the States of the world are ready to form a federation. And that prospect seems considerably more distant today than in 1919.

Things More Enduring

CHRISTIAN STATESMANSHIP

THE activity in the world today of two rival schools of political thought and practice is plain for all to see. Names are immaterial—Fascism and Communism, dictatorship and democracy, the totalitarian State and the liberal State. The conflict is between opposing sets of principles and standards of value, and if the standards are wrong the Government that shapes its action by them will deserve neither the support of its own people nor the approval and respect of other States. And the broad issue today, in Russia no less than in Germany or Italy—and equally, for that matter, in our own country, though here a decisive answer has been given—is whether the State was made for man or man for the State, whether Governments exist to execute the popular will or to compel it.

The distinction goes deeper than may appear, and has consequences beyond what is fully realised. It affects men not merely as political beings but as spiritual beings. For it represents a conflict between the doctrine of the divine right of the State (successor to the outworn divine right of Kings) and the doctrine of the divine right of the individual. In Germany today the right of men of religious conviction, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, to own a higher allegiance than to Herr Hitler and the Reich is denied. "Whoever serves Adolf Hitler," says Herr Baldur von Schirach, the German youth leader, "serves Germany, and whoever serves Germany serves God." To the historic question whether it be right to hearken to God rather than to men the totalitarian State returns a negative answer, at any rate if situations arise in which men who believe they hear the voice of God find its message irreconcilable with the demands of the State. But it is not in Germany and Italy and Russia only that such conflict can arise. It has arisen more than once in our own history. Kings have attempted in vain to impose their will on Parliaments; one Church has assumed the right to veto the worship of God in any form but that favoured by itself. Out of martyrdoms and lesser sufferings ultimately came the heritage of freedom into which we ourselves have entered. The issue is still joined in Germany, and the conflict might be sterner if the Erastian tradition were less strong. But it is hard to believe that even there the conflict will end in the enslavement of the individual con-

science. The Confessional pastors are fighting for a principle vital to mankind.

So far as these islands are concerned there is no outward opposition between the demands of God and the demands of the State. Formally, indeed, they are identical. The King of all the Britains will next year be crowned in Westminster Abbey, and the ceremony that gives his sovereignty its plenitude will be not civil but religious. His Parliament is opened daily with prayer to God, and at the beginning of every session the Sovereign in his speech to the throne invokes the blessing of Heaven on the labours of his Lords and Commons. To that extent we are, beyond all denial, a Christian country. But such externals are worthless unless they symbolise a reality planted in men's souls. The prayers offered regularly in our Churches that Parliament as a corporate body may be rightly directed are idle unless its members severally—and in no less measure the voters who elect them—are ready to receive direction and act on it. It is a commonplace that true religion must embrace and control the whole of life, and if there is any reality in the outward recognition in our public life of the possibility of the direction of individuals, whether Ministers in Cabinets or electors at the poll, by some higher power than themselves, then the hope of a new national unity, not necessarily in method but in ideals and aims, reveals itself. If *vox populi* were deliberately made an echo of *vox Dei*, or as near as human fallibility would allow, there would be a Popular Front worth having—and the only one. That argues no narrow interpretation of Christian doctrine. The individual freedom of conscience which is of the essence of the Christian faith forbids the imposition of Christian dogma on anyone. When the House of Commons refused to admit Charles Bradlaugh unless he professed a belief he did not hold the House was repudiating an essential Christian principle and the member for Northampton defending it. It is not the imposition of dogma, but the acceptance of definite standards of values in all their implications, that could peacefully revolutionise this country and through it the world.

That is a task that concerns the head no less than the heart. The ideal may shine flaming in the heavens; to discover the means of realising it best, or failing least, will tax all the resources of the ablest practical idealists in the land. But the first step—and to take it would reduce our national differences to matters of mere method—is to recognise the existence of an ideal higher not merely than the ideal of the State in the authoritarian sense, but higher even than national patriotism as we know it in this country at its best. For the

ideals of Christianity transcend all national frontiers. They are as alien to the conception of the colour bar prevalent in various parts of the British Dominions as they are to current German doctrines of race. They impose the theory of trusteeship in its highest and most honourable interpretation; they prohibit absolutely the retention of territory or the subjection of peoples from motives of self-interest, even if the motives be dignified by some such phrase as the welfare of the Empire. Sacrifice is more consonant with the teachings of Christianity than aggrandisement, and to school a subject people to the exercise of political freedom is a greater achievement for a civilised Power than to rule it against its will for its material good. These are plain and uncontested truths, and this country has recognised and acted on them in the past. All that need be asked is that it shall be both vigilant and honest and, if need be, self-sacrificing in its application of them in the future.

To write thus is not to indite a sermon, if sermons are to be regarded as mere academic verbiage. It is to suggest an essentially practical way of life for this country and for others. If we seek first national and then international unity in face of the perils that overhang the world it must be based on principles that are enduring and of universal application. They may not be of uniform interpretation. There will still be room for Conservatism, Socialism, Liberalism, even Communism so far as it is co-operative and constructive—but as subsidiary organisms, differing in method, not as primary, differing in aim. The Churches are alive today as they have rarely been to the need for translation into action of the doctrines they profess and preach. The acceptance of those doctrines would at the least make class war and international war alike impossible. It would compel active co-operation in both spheres. It would enthrone justice, even when to bow to an impartial judge meant the sacrifice of apparent self-interest. In a world in which all foundations seem shifting, Fascism, Socialism, Communism, even Parliamentary democracy, are not enough. "Religion," says Dr. Hensley Henson in the closing sentence of his recent Gifford Lectures, "which for civilised mankind must finally mean Christianity, gives primacy to the spiritual element in man, and embodies the principles of all rightful human action in the life and teaching of Jesus. In the acceptance of those principles, first in the sphere of personal behaviour, then in the widening extent of social conduct, finally in the world-wide fellowship of the human race, lies the hope of the world." No better food for reflection could be offered to legislators and electors alike than those pregnant words.

A RECALL TO RELIGION

THE address broadcast by the Archbishop of Canterbury from Lambeth Palace on Sunday evening had been given unusual publicity in advance. It was no isolated utterance, but designed to herald a considered campaign, in which both the Church of England and the Free Churches will take part, having for its aim the recall of the people of this country to religious practices and beliefs from which they have drifted, and to moral standards which they have largely abandoned. Few will question the need for such a summons, nor the right and the duty of "the chief officer of the Church of England" to sound it. The Archbishop is right in saying there has been a drift from religion; he is right in saying that in spite of that there are genuine religious and moral instincts in the common heart; whether he is equally right in holding that the general interest in religion is "perhaps more widespread than ever before" is less certain; the statement is not to be fully reconciled with the declaration made a few sentences earlier, that God is not so much denied as crowded out. A people that has forgotten God is not a people more interested in religion than ever before.

But whatever the starting-point, the goal is clear. Dr. Lang is appealing for the acceptance of no abstract philosophy, nor even for a return to a religion no further defined than in that single word. He is the prophet of a particular religion, world-wide in its appeal, inexorable in its claims on an individual or a people. He calls for a return not merely to the old moral standards, but to the old Christian standards. His recall to religion he defines as "a summons to re-found our life, personal and national, on the fear of God, on the revelation of Himself, of His will and purpose for the human race, in Jesus Christ, on the standards of human conduct which Jesus Christ has set." Such words read reasonably. They are a natural appeal to fall from the lips of any Christian spokesman. They hold the attention without particularly arresting it. And it is probable that the vast majority of the Archbishop's hearers regarded them as unexceptionable pulpit phraseology—that and no more. It is certain that the speaker did not so regard them. Nor can any man who, to the fleeting impression they made upon his ear, adds the reflections to which he is inevitably prompted as he sees them in print before his eyes. What is our life, personal and national, to be, if the controlling force in either case is to be the standards of human conduct which Jesus Christ has set? That is the searching question which the

Primate put on Sunday—and did not answer. He did well to put it; he did well, perhaps, to leave his hearers in the first instance to answer it for themselves. But the religious leaders, laymen as well as clerics, if they associate themselves with that tremendous challenge, are under a compelling obligation to those they seek to lead to show what in terms of personal and national conduct a response to their leadership involves.

Their task is one that calls in equal measure for wisdom and for courage. It is not for them to dictate how the lives of their fellow-citizens, or the larger life of the nation, should be ordered. There is that in every man, or may be, which, if he grants it free expression, will shape the broad purposes of his life aright. But "the standards of human conduct which Jesus Christ has set" are not so simple to define, even for the individual, much less for a nation moving and acting in a world of nations whose standards may be other than its own; in this sphere fervour, however disinterested, is not enough. The brain must be called in to reinforce the heart. There is need of conference, consultation, discussion, a common exploration of possibilities perhaps never adequately considered before. One endeavour of that kind is to be made this summer at Oxford, when a conference, long and carefully prepared for in many countries, on Church, Community and State, assembles there. It will face, as anyone who recognises the force of the Archbishop of Canterbury's words must face, the problem of what a society conditioned by Christian standards would be and how it would differ from the society in which we live today. That is in part an intellectual and in part a spiritual task, but it may take those who shoulder it into strange places. For the discovery of the right way is purposeless unless the resolve exists to follow it wherever it may lead.

There lies the heart of the Christian challenge. For Christianity is a religion not of might and triumph but of dedication and sacrifice. Its values are not the values of common life, and men and nations who hear the summons back to Christian standards may be called on to surrender much that they take for granted today as among the unquestioned essentials of existence. The Dean of St. Paul's, speaking two days before the Archbishop, dwelt like him on a return to forsaken standards, and called for a revival of the revolutionary note of early Christianity, a religion ready to put down the mighty from their seat and to exalt the humble and meek. Those are not meaningless words. They mean disturbingly much. If the return to Christian standards is to be genuine, if the endeavour to discover the will of God for this generation is sincere, many things in the life

of the nation may have to be altered. Are we ready, if need be, to alter them? If Christian standards and the methods by which mining dividends are earned in various British dependencies are found to clash, which is to be accommodated to the other? It is axiomatic of Christianity that it may demand heavy sacrifices of individuals; is the demand to be recognised in the case of nations or of Empires? Is there a Christian Imperialism? If so, is it the same as, or other than, the Imperialism which lacks that qualifying adjective? Where our relations with native races can be shown to partake of exploitation rather than trusteeship, are we prepared to change them? And, if so, will the community, as a Christian community, bear the cost?

The Archbishop's appeal for a return to religion may be answered or rejected. But if it is answered, let it be understood fully what the answer involves. It may well mean a new austerity, the shedding of pretences and extravagances and ostentations and luxuries, the return to a simplicity which will level, or materially lower, the barriers of class and wealth. It will mean a new readiness on the part of the whole community to share the burdens of the children, of the sick, the aged, the unemployed, and to regard such taxation as that necessitates as a form of ordered charity in which each man contributes not of compulsion (though compulsion there must be for the sake of efficiency), but ungrudgingly according to his means. It means remoulding society; it means presenting to the Nazi State and the Fascist State and the Communist State the challenge of a Christian State—a challenge resting not on might or power, but on the demonstration of a higher and better conception of life. No one can dare to present that challenge who does not mean it almost desperately.

NATIONALISM AND GOD

THERE can be few of those who read Lord Hugh Cecil's letter in last Monday's *Times* who did not recognise with thankfulness that the gift of prophetic utterance had not completely passed from this generation. For the prophet, in the right and literal sense of the word, is not the foreteller but the forthteller, a man inspired at the fit moment to arrest in fit words the attention of his fellow-men and impress on them vital truths which, once faced, can be neither questioned nor disregarded. The Provost of Eton, on the rare

occasions when he breaks his accustomed silence, is such a one. His theme in the letter in question was twofold, a particular problem and a broad doctrine. The particular problem was that of the 30,000 unhappy Assyrian Christians for whom no settled habitation can be found on the face of the globe—not even in the unpeopled spaces of Australia or Canada or the Argentine or Brazil. The broad doctrine concerned the duty of Christian citizenship and Christian statesmanship.

For Lord Hugh, the Assyrian incident serves to show once more “how enormously feebler Christian sentiment is than nationalist sentiment.” The Assyrians are only our fellow-Christians, not our fellow-nationals; if they had been Englishmen the thing would have been settled in a fortnight. As it is, public opinion is unstirred. And Lord Hugh Cecil is moved to the mordant comment, “The individuals who create public opinion are, I suppose, eminent statesmen, distinguished journalists, pious ministers of religion, thoughtful leaders of thought. Diffused among them lies the apathy of public opinion and the responsibility for not helping the Assyrians. And yet if Christianity be true, in a few years these eminent, distinguished, pious and thoughtful persons will have passed into a new state of being, where they will feel the force of the tremendous saying, ‘I was a stranger and ye took me not in’; to which, I suppose, it is intended to rejoin, ‘Well, but, Lord, you are an Asiatic, and you must remember the policy of our Dominions forbade Asiatic immigration.’”

There, for the moment, the Assyrians may be left. If they wander homeless they have at least served as a text for a great arraignment of the people of Britain—a great arraignment and a greater challenge. “Christianity,” Lord Hugh Cecil repeats, “is a far feebler motive than nationalism.” “We ought,” he insists, “to love Christ and His Church better than we love our country; but with the rarest exceptions we do not,” and he adds, as a corollary which he might on reflection admit to be questionable, that if we could invert our preference and care more for God than for our country, we should be both happier and richer, for we should be free from wars and various economic ills. It might be so, if all the world, and not one nation only, inverted its preferences. What makes Lord Hugh’s dogma so hard a saying is the necessity of contemplating the case of a single nation attempting to put the love of God above the love of self in a hostile world. That does not absolve the nation from its duty, but it may point to a road of sacrifice, and national sacrifices are almost unknown things in a world in which

noble sacrifices by individuals are common. A nation arrested by Lord Hugh Cecil's words must not count on being necessarily richer and happier in consequence.

Where all have sinned, this nation, we may be disposed to claim, is the least of sinners; patriotism with us is rarely a blind worship of the State; our national frontiers have never been erected into barriers; our nationalism if self-respecting is not aggressive. That is broadly true, though an able foreigner could draw a fairly formidable indictment against us without delving into any distant past. For, viewed in the light of the highest ideals we could set before us, our national record is not signally better than that of the average men and women of the nation who week by week in varying language humbly acknowledge their sins before God. In the concluding volume of his striking work, *Civitas Dei*, Mr. Lionel Curtis insists most rightly that in shaping a nation's or an individual's life it is essential to see the end clearly before the means can be determined, and the end he defines, giving different expression to the same conception as Lord Hugh Cecil, as co-operation with the purposes of God through the dedication of the individual to the service not merely of his own nation but of humanity. For the individual the nation must often inevitably be his only field. His own efforts may never reach beyond its frontiers. But at least he can insist that those whom he elects to guide its destinies shall direct its affairs with their eyes on an ultimate goal—not the unity and prosperity of Britain alone, or of Europe, or of the British Commonwealth, but of all mankind.

What, in the tragic perplexities of this riven world, does that practically mean? It means that statesmen should have courage to confess moral ideals—if they intend genuinely to pursue them; it is no use abjuring appeals to national self-interest if national self-interest remains the hidden motive. It means a renewed and concerted attempt—perhaps the Churches are better qualified to make it than anyone—to establish contact with those sections of public opinion in other countries which are ready, in like manner, to look beyond their frontiers and set their nation's policies in the framework of humanity. Never was that more difficult. In more countries than one the State is exalted above God, and men and women who put God first are public enemies with no opportunity to influence public policy. Yet never was it more necessary that men of like mind should be talking to each other across national frontiers. If somehow two nations, particularly two antagonistic nations, could be persuaded that each was seeking not alone its own good but the other's good as well, and would prove its goodwill in such tangible

forms as tariff reduction, the face of the world would rapidly be changed. The vexed question of colonies, to take a single example, would become simple if the point were ever reached when not markets nor prestige nor national security, but the good of the inhabitants and equal freedom of access to the products of the territory, were the ruling considerations in the minds of all the negotiators.

There is no question here of formal creeds. When Lord Hugh Cecil speaks of a Christian loyalty he cannot be taken—certainly no words written on this page can be taken—as postulating acceptance of particular dogmas or articles of belief. Christ laid down no policies for States, but He set a way of life before individuals; it is for the individual, whatever views he may hold on sacraments or apostolic succession or the Trinity, to apply the principles he understands for himself to the life of his nation. In Germany the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Churches are making common cause in the face of persecution. Throughout the world, without the sacrifice of any principle, they could manifest a greater and more potent co-operation in proclaiming the truth that as the nation is greater than the individual, so humanity is greater than the nation. In this country at least such a gospel would fall on no deaf ears. No statesman making his own the ideal Lord Hugh Cecil has so impressively voiced, indifferent to party gain or personal advancement, need fear that he would be dismissed as an unpractical visionary. He would far more probably be hailed by the post-War generation, if by no other, as the leader for whom it was consciously or sub-consciously waiting. And he would be astonished into humility by the multitude of those who would press round him, saying, like the man in the House of the Interpreter, "Set down my name, Sir."

THE ENGLISH BIBLE

THE celebration of the four hundredth anniversary of the order issued by Henry VIII that the English Bible should be placed in every English church has a special relevance to a generation which by comparison with its predecessors reads the Bible little. In its neglect it compares badly with its forebears. It is significant that when printing was invented nearly five centuries ago the first complete book to be produced by the new art was the Bible, and not less so that when in 1881, within the memory of many living men, the

Revised New Testament appeared, a million copies were sold on the day of publication and two American newspapers published the complete text as supplements. But the translation of the Bible into English had not waited for Gutenberg and Faust. Seventy years before their printing-press had been set up at Mainz, John Wycliffe had given an English Bible in laborious manuscript to the common men who listened to his teaching. "He appealed for the direct relation of the individual to God without mediators," writes Professor Trevelyan, and for a Latin Bible interpreted by priests and friars he offered, in the face of bitter opposition, an English Bible which his followers could hear and interpret for themselves, laying thereby the foundations for the English Reformation. A hundred years after Wycliffe had done his work printing came to England, and it was in printed form that the great translation by Tyndale and Coverdale established its hold on the English people and was set in English churches in 1538.

Inferior in accuracy, and in some respects in diction, that version may have been to the majestic Authorised Version of 1611, but its place in the history of religion in England is higher. For now for the first time the right of the common man to hear in his own tongue the word of God was recognised. Wycliffe had read the Bible in English to his Lollards, but that was in defiance of authority and in spite of persecution. The Bible of 1538 was placed in churches to be read in the native tongue by the command of the sovereign of the realm, and men and women who could hear the Gospels in language they could understand found there a message to whose essential simplicity they could make direct response. For the Puritans, in particular, both inside the Church of England and outside it, the Bible, rendered into the familiar language of daily life, was the foundation of their faith. And when the English Bible in the churches was followed eleven years later by an English Prayer Book, religion in England acquired a reality and depth impossible to men to whom the Scriptures and the liturgy were presented in an unknown tongue.

The service rendered by the early translators of the English Bible, Tyndale first and then the translators of 1611, to the English language is immeasurable. They set a standard which no writer has surpassed, and none perhaps but Shakespeare has approached. But by setting it they raised the average of common speech and writing far above what it had been, or gave any promise of being. On the religious life of England the influence of the Bible has been supreme, for to its authority even the authority of the Church has yielded

place—though in all essentials both point to the same goal. The Bible has made, more than any other factor, for religious unity. Ecclesiastical differences, of dogma, of ritual, of Church government, exist and tend often to assume a wholly false proportion. As distinctions they have their uses and their place, and to that the Bible that is read in every church of every Christian faith inevitably reduces them if it is read aright. Holy Scripture, says the Sixth Article of Religion, containeth all things necessary to salvation. And though not everything in the Bible is immediately clear to the uninstructed, it is simple historic truth that the religion of the great mass of the English people, so far as they profess religion at all, is rooted and fixed in the English Bible. That common foundation creates a unity in which differences of sect and creed lose divisive force.

To speak so gives no excuse for Bibliolatry. The Bible is a guide to worship, not an object of worship. It embodies the thought and the aspirations, and in a measure the errors, of fallible men, and its influence was most in danger when men feared to apply to it the tests of authenticity by which every historic writing must be judged. The Higher Critics who were once thought Christianity's deadliest foes are seen today as its truest vindicators. They have destroyed the doctrine of verbal inspiration, but they have left the doctrine of spiritual inspiration unimpaired. The Bible cannot and need not shelter behind false assumptions. The personality of Christ as revealed in the Gospels is not less real, less convincing, or less a consistent whole when we recognise, as we must, that we cannot claim (as the recent Report on Doctrine in the Church of England wisely points out) to possess His actual words. He spoke in Aramaic, the writers of the Gospels have given us His words translated into Greek, and we have in our Bible the Greek translated into English. The earliest of the Gospels, moreover, is believed to have been written fully thirty years after His life was ended, and the earliest version of it surviving—the last of no one knows how many copies of copies of the original—dates from the fourth century only. Yet while, to quote the Report on Doctrine again, it follows that "the method of direct appeal to isolated texts in our Lord's teaching" is for these and other reasons liable to error, the essential unity of the teaching as recorded by the four Evangelists (and to a small extent by St. Paul) is decisive testimony to the writers' fidelity to truth.

Only in one respect may the celebration of the installation of the Bible in English in English churches lead thoughts astray. There is nothing English about the Bible except its translation into that

among many tongues. If it possesses one essential quality it is universality. It tells the story of the manifestation of God, first, it is true, to a single nation, but then to all mankind. The doctrine of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man emerges direct and undeniable from the New Testament, and it makes no distinction of kindred or tongue or people or nation. In modern language, it lays relentless stress on the international, not the national, and those who see in the Bible in its English form a potent factor in the unification of the English people are strangely blind if they fail to see equally that its teaching can find fulfilment only in co-operation and understanding between peoples of every race. To maintain belief in a constructive internationalism and continue to work for it is a stern tax on faith today, but that and none other is the task which the Bible we are commemorating enjoins.

THE WAR AND EASTER

THE great festivals of the Christian Church become seasons of deep poignancy in war-time. To those with resolution to confront the facts full-face the irony is tragic almost beyond endurance. Christ is born. "And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Christ is crucified. "He was taken from prison and from judgement; he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken." Christ is risen. "Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." Those are the facts—for they are facts in history, whatever the interpretations put on them or the accretions of doctrine about them—to which the thoughts of men are called in every Christian country of the world at Easter. And Easter, let it be remembered, has no meaning except in relation to the Good Friday that comes before it. Crucifixion, resurrection, *mors janua vitae*—even viewed only as allegory, could anything better mirror the despair and hopes of men today?

In a recent issue the *Christian News-Letter* quotes a remarkable letter from a woman who has recently spent ten months in a Russian prison. Asked on one occasion whether Russia was likely to remain

Christian, she answered, "The country is more Christian now than it has ever been before. Do you really think men defeat God?" It would be hard to imagine a question more pertinent at this time. It has been pertinent, of course, all through history, never more than on that day nineteen hundred years ago that is commemorated this week. Such questions are no mere rhetoric. It is not from pulpits only, or chiefly, that they are put and answered. No statesman believed more profoundly that he was the humble instrument of a living God than Abraham Lincoln when he was Commander-in-Chief of his country's forces in a war that decided her existence. The man who wrote:

Truth for ever on the scaffold, wrong for ever on the throne ;
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own,

was his country's Ambassador at the Court of St. James's. "God is writing a very different treaty from this," one of the Allied signatories of the Treaty of Versailles said. Can men defeat God? One answer means Good Friday. And in the tragedies of war in history there has often been no Easter Day.

Apply the question to the present crisis. What is the reply to Fascism? Communism or Christianity? What is the reply to Communism? Fascism or Christianity? A different reply, no doubt, is possible—Democracy. Yet hardly different, for it must be a Christian, not a materialist, democracy, in which duties are recognised more than rights are claimed, and sacrifice ranks higher than acquisition. That, in the barest terms, is what is meant by the assertion, so often and so rightly heard of late, that the task of tomorrow is the building of a Christian civilisation. That alone could constitute resurrection after the crucifixion of the War. But one step must come earlier still. Before the building can rise the plans must be drawn. There has never yet been a Christian civilisation. No one knows what it is. What is certain is that it can never take sudden shape. It is something into which the civilisation of today must be transformed, partly by revolution—for the War is going to revolutionise many things—and partly by procedures more orderly and gradual. And for guides the world needs, and needs desperately, practical prophets. There are plenty of leaders with practical capacity uninspired by vision, plenty of visionaries who never recognise the need for starting from things as they are, not from a *tabula rasa*. The practical prophet is something different from either.

Such men exist. Some of them exist unknown. They may emerge yet from the persecuted churches in Germany or Russia or Poland. They will emerge, it is not to be doubted, from among the youth of our own country, who will find salvation, in the midst of their perplexity and frustration, in the vision of a world to be created by the dedication of their wills and energies and powers. For some of them certainly the question quoted here will be translated into the challenge they are unconsciously waiting for. But it can easily be misinterpreted. Can men defeat God? does not mean simply Can Hitler or Stalin or their associates defeat God? There need be no illusions about the leaders of Germany. Christian charity at its utmost does not demand that black be described as white. And the declaration that we are fighting evil things has been proved even truer by today than it was when the Prime Minister uttered it the day war broke out. But as there are Hitlers and Ribbentrops in Germany devising evil and perpetrating it day and night, so, let it not be forgotten, there are Niemöllers in prisons and concentration camps, immured there because they were resolved, with firmness in the right as God gave them to see the right, to obey God rather than men. Across the carnage of the War we can look to joining with them in the building of a new and Christian civilisation. "At rare moments of history," wrote Dr. H. A. L. Fisher in his *History of Europe*, "the feeling of Christian fellowship overmasters the jealousies and hatreds by which the Church of Christ is ever liable to be rent asunder." One of these may not be far distant.

Signs of that are not altogether wanting. The firmness of the Pope in the cause of peace and regarding its essential conditions has won deep appreciation from Protestants as well as Catholics in every country outside Germany, and the part Pius XII may yet play in associating the visionary with the practical in world politics is not to be underrated. It is not a negligible thing that the Pontiff who lives to proclaim to the world that God is not mocked for ever should one week be receiving Herr von Ribbentrop at the request of the latter's Government and the next President Roosevelt's envoy, Mr. Sumner Welles. Nor is the only example of Christian statesmanship to be found at Rome. It is again no negligible thing that the British Minister who has charge of the conduct of our foreign policy is one who has never sought to disguise the part spiritual values play in his public and private life.¹ The list could be lengthened. In this last week the President of the United States has been insisting on the necessity for a moral basis for any

¹ Lord Halifax was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs 1938-40.

peace worth concluding, and the Queen of the Netherlands dwelling on the need for building the life of States on spiritual foundations. They at least are clear whether men can defeat God or not.

This generation, it may be, must suffer crucifixion. Conflict with evil is better than compromise with evil, and it is doubtful whether today a third choice exists. If the war is fought through one consequence is certain; it will be followed by a new war against the poverty and misery, and perhaps the anarchy, that the war with Germany will have left as legacy. It is hard to think of any resurrection there. But not impossible. If bridges are thrown over social gulfs, parade and privilege swept away by voluntary surrender, need met by willing sacrifice as well as by renunciation imposed by drastic but necessary laws, then in this country and in others a new society may yet be built, of architecture both human and divine.

THE REST OF OUR LIVES

No man or woman capable of reflection at all can be failing to reflect, as 1940 opens, on the bearing of the War on the whole of their future lives. There is no one in any of the warring countries whose fortunes will be unaffected. Much that will happen before this year is out is completely hidden. Some who read these pages will be no longer living by December; that will be true of more in 1940 than in most years; but who will be taken, and when, and who left, only time and the event can show. But the majority will live on, with what remains to them of life, whether it be fifty years or thirty or ten, permanently and perhaps radically changed. Changed, moreover, as it seems, inevitably for the worse. The incalculable waste of war means the diversion on an incalculable scale, of men's effort from production designed to increase material comfort and well-being to production designed to destroy and cripple life. That is a commonplace, and we need not concern ourselves with the economics of it. They express themselves in the fact, of which in this particular month we have reason to be especially conscious, that for as many years ahead as we can see, from a quarter to a third of our incomes, and in some cases more, will be impounded to pay the running expenses of the State and the cost of a Great War breaking on us when the bill for the last one is far from settled.

From that plain fact we start. The situation it reflects was deliber-

ately created. The country never dreamed of refusing the price of freedom. If it was a choice between sacrifice and surrender to Hitlerism there could be neither doubt nor hesitation. Whatever that price might be it would be paid. But willingness to pay does not make the process of payment easier or less painful. Everyone today is thinking out economies, for economies there must be and drastic, if taxes are to be paid. It means in all cases sacrifice, in some very real hardship. On every man and woman, and on every child growing up to shoulder a burden he had no part in creating, life will press heavier than it would have or should. It is no case of merely giving up luxuries. Some material needs will have to go unsatisfied; many of the conditions of a full and cultured life will be out of reach. Travel, unique in its power to enlarge experience and enrich the mind, is impracticable now because of the War itself. After the War it will be just as impracticable for thousands in the classes accustomed to travel freely before, because when they have given the State its due there will be nothing left to pay for trains and steamers and hotels. Education will suffer. The public schools already are wondering whether they can continue to exist in a world too poor to meet their fees. For large sections of the population who will find that what the Chancellor of the Exchequer leaves them suffices for no more than food and clothing and bare necessities, there will be drastic curtailment of expenditure on recreation and entertainment, and even, deplorably, on books.

It is a bitter prospect, and no self-deception can make it otherwise. It may be dangerous as well as bitter. Unless the post-war situation is faced with abnormal foresight and courage, and where necessary self-abnegation, economic chaos and resultant unemployment will be such that social discontents of the gravest character must follow. The unity which is sustaining the nation in war will be every whit as imperative in peace, but far more difficult to achieve and perpetuate. The material side of reconstruction will demand, and must secure, the application of the best brains the nation has at its disposal, and it is not too soon for them to be set to the task today. But there is a moral side at least as important, and if we are to be ready in that field too, the moment to face the need and prepare to meet it is now. The first thing is to realise that for the rest of our lives the structure of the nation will be different from what it has been. The gulf that separates the extremes of wealth and poverty must be narrowed. Taxation, falling, as it falls today, with special incidence on the rich, will effect that, and it is one of the recompenses for the blows the taxation deals. There will be less first-class

travel, fewer luxury cars and extravagant restaurants and hotels, a sharp restriction of expenditure on personal adornment; many packs of hounds will be given up; less money—preferably none—will be squandered at night clubs and like resorts. We shall be driven necessarily to a new simplicity of habits, not for a year or two, but for the rest of our lives.

With that certainty before us we had better make the best of it. We may come to find in the end that it is not after all an evil to make the best of, but a positive good. Certain principles must be accepted without question or reserve. The first is that sacrifices must be made by those most able to bear them. The rich (to use the term relatively) must forgo superfluities before the poor are called on to forgo essentials. There are generally accepted standards of living below which no part of the population should be allowed to drop; and the cost of that must necessarily fall on those able to observe higher standards. That in itself will reduce the distance and the contrast between the extremes of wealth and poverty, as it must be reduced if the unity of the nation is to be preserved—not merely with a view to avoiding social upheaval, but because to knit the fortunate and the unfortunate, the scholar and the industrialist and the merchant and the craftsman, together is an aim to be pursued for its own positive and demonstrable value. And if the gulf is to be narrowed it must be plainly seen to be narrowed. Keeping up appearances will be more a vice than a virtue. Anything like ostentation or elaboration—elaboration adds nothing to the grace of hospitality—will be (as, indeed, it is already) a sin against society. People who deliberately set standards in dress and habits and entertainment which their friends cannot attain proclaim themselves bad citizens. There is, of course, a mean. Not every one is required to order his life on a £5 a week standard. But it is much better to move that way than to aim at the £5000 a year standard.

And how great, in fact, will be the real loss—for the readers of this volume, for example? Their plans for the education of their children may have to be modified, but an education providing admirable preparation for life and training of character will be well within their reach. And though that may be obtainable elsewhere than at the older public schools and universities, those institutions should be fully capable of adjusting themselves to the new conditions with little or no sacrifice of the great traditions that have made them what they are. Fewer books and pictures may be bought; but the best of the great literature of the world can be purchased in this country for half a crown a volume, and often less; libraries will

increase in numbers; no man who desires to follow his bent in reading will be seriously hindered for lack of means. Entertainment may be on a more modest scale, but neither friendships nor more casual social contacts need suffer for that. New values—and a new valuation there will have to be—may be better values. The new life may be, in every stratum of the community, a better life. But if it is to be not merely a better but the best life it must result not from haphazard and enforced economies, but from a conscious resolve to use necessity as an instrument for the consolidation of unity and the promotion of content.

BRACED AND COMPACT?

“WHAT of the faith and fire within us, Men who march away?” What of the faith and fire within us, men and women who live and work at home? The men who march away have their work to do, and heroically they are doing and have done it. But dramatic and spectacular though their rôle may be, the issue of their achievement must depend in the last resort on the nation behind them. Let there be nervelessness, hesitation, apathy there, and the War is lost or not worth winning. Only a nation braced for its ordeal, unsparing in effort, certain of its purpose, can be worthy of the men who are offering their lives for it daily. If it fails in that, those lives, with all their hopes and possibilities and unrealised promise, will be sacrificed for less than nothing. Is it failing or succeeding? Are things well or ill with us today, not in far fields of battle, but here at home where the nation lives its life? There can be little doubt about the answer. Compared with what might be, things are ill. Sir Stafford Cripps, returning from Russia, found here a lack of the sense of urgency. That is putting it mildly. What is wrong with the nation’s spirit may be matter for diagnosis, but that the wrong is there is incontestable. One plain question is enough. In this supreme crisis of our existence do we offer to the world and to ourselves the spectacle of forty-five million men and women welded by a common peril and a common purpose into a single whole, fired by a faith which we understand and which arms us with powers we never knew we possessed?

The answer is all too clear. That is not the picture of the nation today. Virtue somehow, for some reason, has gone out of us. The

national fibre is unmistakably different from what it was in those days in 1940 which the Prime Minister could speak of, in accents that carried universal conviction, as our finest hour. No one can pretend we are living through our finest hour today. It is not that the tide of war is temporarily adverse. That might well be depressing us more than it is. Acquiescence in misfortunes may have good or bad causes. Faith, not cynicism or blind refusal to face realities, must cushion such blows, faith in what we have done and been in the past, faith in what we shall be and do yet, faith that what we are fighting for is something eternally and fundamentally right, as what we are fighting against is something eternally and fundamentally evil. The morbid cynicism of youth, the indolent indifference and selfishness of middle age, so far as they exist, lay our efforts for victory under a fatal handicap. Yet to some appeals there is a surprising response. It is a matter of common testimony that the men in every munition factory have been working in these last months for Russia as they had never felt called on to work for their own country. There are no doubt some good reasons for that. It is not merely, perhaps it is not at all, devotion to the doctrines of Lenin or Karl Marx. It is more probably admiration for the spirit of a country which, suddenly and treacherously attacked by an initially more powerful foe, has defended itself and then moved to the offensive with a sublimity of sacrifice and an indomitable tenacity of purpose that stir the admiration of any man or woman whose work at a lathe or a blast furnace can contribute an iota to Russia's equipment for victory. That is all to the good, and wholly good; but can only Russia evoke such spontaneous effort?

It is to be hoped not. The claim of our own country is paramount, not because it is our own, but because we believe to our depths in its destiny and its worth. Yet do we? Is the root of the trouble the absence, or insufficiency, of that belief? Lack of vision and imagination doubtless accounts for something. The war is far from us as individuals in this island—in Russia, in Burma, in Sumatra and Java. Air attacks on Britain have ceased, and no guns are thundering, as they were through those four years a quarter of a century ago, within earshot of our shores. The *blitzes* may recur. If they do there will be no flinching. So far from that, we shall begin to live our finest hour again. The Germans may be following the path of wisdom if they mean what they say when they proclaim that there will be no more bombing of British cities. But must immunity mean a slackening of morale? Is life to be as usual because bombs no longer rain down on London and Coventry and Bristol? Are

we simply to sit on padded chairs and write to the papers to demand a concentrated air offensive on Germany? We may get that. If so it will be carried out by the flower of the youth of Britain. What is to sustain them as they drive through snow and cloud, face the blinding cone of searchlights and the hail of flak, wait moment after moment for the swoop of the Messerschmitt above them? The consciousness that they are making life safe for the crowds that pack the Albert Hall for a boxing contest, with 750 parked cars to deride petrol economy outside? Or for the racketeers who line their pockets from black-market dealings and are sentenced to prison with the option of a fine which they can afford to pay ten times over? Is it this that we call on them to fight for?

The case need not be overstated. The racketeers, the coupon-swindlers, the food-hoarders, are no more than a handful. But it is not they themselves that matter. It is that only in a sick and slack society are such crimes against the nation possible. Laws are enforced not by penalties, though penalties must be there as a last resort, but by public opinion. The man who sins against society in war-time ought to fear not the police but his neighbour's anger. But that emotion is dormant today. Even knowledge of the unimaginable barbarities an inhuman foe is inflicting on helpless populations throughout Europe will hardly rouse it. Yet everywhere the right spirit burns, though damped down by some unexplained frustration. The appeal for a lead, for inspiration from somewhere, is universal, even though the desire is not always voiced in words. There is no reluctance to accept sacrifice. The agreement on "a Spartan decency" as standard for the women's services strikes the right note. So does the introduction of utility clothing (but why not to the exclusion of more expensive and luxurious garments?). But everywhere hungry sheep look up, and often are not fed. The growing demand in army camps for lectures and discussions on questions vital to the nation's life is altogether encouraging. Everything that ought to be realised—the magnitude of the menace to our very existence, the equal magnitude of the salvation victory will bring, the compulsion of the call to defend the national life, and what that life might be, against the destruction and degradation that threaten—the nation can be made to realise by any leader, the Prime Minister, Sir Stafford Cripps, the new Primate, whose lips a live coal from off the altar touches. The faith and the fire only wait for a rekindling.

Yet that very assertion is a confession of failure. Why do men and women in Britain today wait for inspiration from outside? Why are

they listening for a voice? Have we no voice within us? Are we ignorant of what is needed? Are there no selfishnesses and self-indulgences to be purged away, no efforts to be redoubled, no pledges to be renewed, no barriers of class or self-importance to be broken down, no lines of division to be drawn between necessities (including necessary recreation) and superfluities? That at least calls for no one's action but our own. Some other things do. One reason why the example of Russia is so powerful in its effects in many quarters is the belief, right or wrong (almost certainly right), that in that great country no one is in a position to get richer through the War. Not many people are getting richer through it here. The effects of the excess profits tax and the steeply graduated surtax are imperfectly comprehended. But if more safeguards are practicable let them forthwith be imposed. The case for conscription of all wealth and all labour of every kind is theoretically strong. The Government has actually taken powers to go to any length in that direction; it is only the impossibility of handling suddenly resources so vast that imposes a brake on their application. That is an essentially practical question. The recovery of morale, the rekindling of faith and fire, is something different. We can leave the one to the Government, if we see to the other—the more important—ourselves. The Prime Minister has spoken of his reconstituted Cabinet as “braced and compact.” Can those words properly be used of the country as a whole? Will there be any hope of victory till they can?

A DAY OF DEDICATION

THE fact that, by desire of the King, the third anniversary of the outbreak of war is appointed as a National Day of Prayer and Dedication may seem only obvious and natural. So, in a sense, it is. Yet in fact the King's action is based on tremendous postulates. It assumes an unquestioning belief in the efficacy of prayer—a belief which the Churches hold by the nature of their being, but the majority of the nation probably does not,—and an equal belief in the value of assembling in places of worship and factories and workshops some millions of men and women whose lives are habitually prayerless to join in a liturgy of prayers of thanksgiving and dedication and intercession. These, it may be repeated, are tremendous postulates. They argue a faith which may seem not far removed from blind

credulity. The King's call will no doubt be answered. Many churches will be fuller on Thursday than they ever are on a Sunday. Congregations will bow their heads and murmur their responses and listen with respect to the brief addresses they are likely to hear from the pulpits. By Friday what will they feel they have achieved?

That question is asked here neither cynically nor sceptically. It is asked because the whole value of the Day of Dedication depends on the answer to it. It makes all the difference between mere formalism and deep reality. What answer do the Churches themselves give? They at least believe that something, perhaps very much, may be achieved, and they have a duty to make their convictions clear. It would be a powerful reinforcement of the King's call if clergy and ministers took that as the theme of their sermons this coming Sunday, so that such at least as happened to hear them then might go to the services on Thursday in the spirit best calculated to make those services profitable. The task will not be altogether easy. There are, of course, traditional dogmas about prayer, perfectly just and reasonable and valid. But they have, rightly or wrongly, only a limited appeal, and this aims at being not a sectional but a national observance. The Church is not asked to modify its message or compromise its doctrines; it would gain nobody's respect by that; but it must set itself earnestly on such a day as this to speak specifically to those who come within its doors ready to hear but not ready to make professions of beliefs they do not hold as yet. What they may regard as the preacher's normal stock-in-trade will make much less impression on them than a reminder of the convictions men of unquestioned intellectual range and distinction have held as to the reasonableness and efficacy of prayer—such, for example, as Lord Balfour's declaration in his Gifford Lectures that in speaking of God "I mean a God whom men can love, a God to whom men can pray." No one else's authority is a substitute for personal faith, but belief in prayer comes above all things by practising it, and it can mean much to have that practice vindicated by persons to whom a superficial or credulous piety could never be ascribed.

Moreover, though the average man of today may feel as great a distaste as Christ Himself for those who for a parade (the pretence may even deceive themselves) make long prayers, he does not reject *à priori* belief in spiritual forces with which contact can be made and by which men's actions may be prompted and determined. If no more is asked of him than that, he will join in the Day of Prayer without hesitations or reserves, finding here sufficient basis for true community of attitude and purpose with all who are observing it.

And no more on this occasion should be asked, for to this observance are called not communicants or church members as such but the great body of citizens. To those of them who genuinely regard religion as a superstitious survival the day can mean nothing, but if they understand at all that most understandable paradox "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief," then their place is with all those who are dedicating themselves humbly and sincerely to the service of God and man and seeking strength to make that dedication effective. The declaration that "he that is not with me is against me" has its meaning in its context. But so have those other words "he that is not against us is for us," and it is these that are relevant here. None but claimants to unblemished virtue and complete self-sufficiency will find themselves in an alien atmosphere.

The Order of Service framed by the Archbishops is wisely and discerningly conceived. The First Lesson, for example, is not, as it might have been, the familiar "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered" (on which the Metropolitan of Moscow preached in 1812 as Napoleon was retreating from the still smoking capital), but a passage from St. Peter which opens with the impressive and enheartening charge, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." The nation as a nation and the individuals as individuals that compose it are called to repentance in terms that no honest critic could misconstrue. There is no room for the comment that it is Germany that needs repentance, not Britain. Germany does need it. Not to believe that she needs it even more than we do would be carrying humility to the point of insincerity, and later in the service a prayer for our enemies includes, in words that say neither too little nor too much, the petition that she may repent and change her ways. But the purpose of the anniversary observance is that this nation may re-dedicate itself to God, and in that third parties have no place. Concern for our own needs and our own deficiencies will take us all the time we have to give.

But there is more than that to be said about repentance. There is no suggestion here that in "asking God's forgiveness for all that has been amiss in our national life over the years that are past" we are proclaiming to the world sins and shortcomings in our national policy. What is in question is the stains and imperfections that every one must recognise in the life of the nation, and that for so many of its citizens have made their lives hard and hopeless and incomplete. But in a democracy everything begins with the individual. There is not much need to trouble about the submission of the nation to the will of God if its individual citizens are ready to

submit to it. It is here that a Day of Dedication makes its challenge, for it implies before all things sacrifice. And that in no mere theory. Sacrifice may be the one condition of peace and public welfare when the war is over, and everything will depend on whether it is spontaneous or compelled. No one doubts, for example, that every citizen of this land must somehow be assured of an income that will enable a certain minimum standard of living to be maintained. Is insistence on that to come first, as it should, from the rich, who know they will be taxed to make it possible, or from the potential beneficiaries and their accredited spokesmen? Any who are not ready for such sacrifice can have no place in a service of dedication. There must be readiness equally for national sacrifices—of prestige or of actual dominion. Are we prepared to give immediate self-government to this or that dependent colony, or to India, if we are satisfied that such a course is in their interest, even if not in ours? That is not to suggest that it is at this moment in their interest; there are good reasons for thinking it is not. But it is to insist that our own self-interest shall play no major part in determining policy.

No thoughtful person with a touch of imagination can fail to see what the possibilities of a Day of National Prayer and Dedication seriously faced by a serious people are. Whether that seriousness will in fact be manifest is not yet certain. The King has ordered the observance; there has been no indication so far whether the Government is to take any corporate part in it; Ministers who can meet the Premier at Paddington at midnight should not find it difficult to gather in the Abbey at midday.¹ But they and all others in city and village will gather in vain unless one condition is fulfilled. Faith in the efficacy of sustained prayer does not justify much belief in the value of sporadic prayer. An observance such as this can have little place in the pattern of national or individual life if it ends with the day. For some it may be a continuance and intensification of a familiar practice, for others a starting-point to new experience and new discovery. If it is neither it is nothing. That is not the goal to which the King, in high leadership, has called the nation.

¹ They did in fact so gather.

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